

UNIVERSITY OF VAASA

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FINLAND'S NATIONAL MEDIATION COOPERATION

Coordinating Mediation Networks From the Public Officials Perspective

Master's Thesis in
Public Management

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES	3
ABSTRACT	4
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	5
1. INTRODUCTION	7
1.1. Background	8
1.1.1. Diplomacy	9
1.1.2. Political conflicts	12
1.2. Problem setting	17
1.3. Limitations of the study	19
2. THERORETICAL FRAMEWORK	22
2.1. Conflict prevention	23
2.1.1. Actors and their roles in conflict prevention	26
2.2. Mediation	32
2.2.1. Finnish perspective to mediation	38
2.2.2. Funding for mediation in Finland	45
2.2.3. Finnish mediation actors and MFA's key partners	47
2.2.4. Comparison of mediation activities with other countries and possible models for Finland	48
2.3. Peace work cooperation	52
2.3.1. Funding relationships	56
2.3.2. Diplomatic tracks, multi-track mediation and network model	57
2.3.3. Finland as a coordinator of mediation	60

3. METHODOLOGY	63
3.1. Research methods	63
3.2. Sampling	67
3.3. Question design	69
3.4. Interview setting	69
3.5. Data analysis	71
4. OBSERVATIONS OF THE INTERVIEWS	74
4.1. Cooperation between Finnish mediation actors	75
4.1.1. Contacts and networks	78
4.1.2. Mediation workshops, forums and networks and their coordination between different tracks	80
4.1.3. Communication	83
4.1.4. Use of social media	84
4.1.5. Information sharing and gathering	85
4.1.6. Evaluation and analysis of cooperation and partners	87
4.1.7. Rules for mediation	88
4.1.8. Roles in mediation at a national level	91
4.1.9. Development suggestions for cooperation and coordination	93
4.2. Finland's mediation	98
4.3. The role of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland	101
5. DISCUSSION	104
5.1. Main findings	104
5.2. Conclusions, recommendations and further research	114
5.3. Quality, credibility and significance of the study	123
LIST OF REFERENCES	128

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1. Haastattelun rakenne (in Finnish)

APPENDIX 2. Interview structure

APPENDIX 3. List of the interviewees

LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES

Figure 1. Possible civil society groupings	28
Table 1. Global Frequency of Conflict Items in 2015 by Intensity Groups	12
Table 2. Number of inter-, intra-, and substate conflicts in 2015 by intensity level	14
Table 3. Global Trends in Armed Conflict, 1946–2015	15
Table 4. Overlay Matrix	17
Table 5. CSO roles at different stages of the conflict cycle	29
Table 6. Summary of CSO Strengths, Weaknesses and Challenges	53

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ABSTRACT:

Mediation field has become more complex with various non-official actors. Thus, better coordination is needed to avoid the competition and overlaps, and to benefit from the complementarity. The topic is particularly timely due to the current refugee crises and recent cuts in development cooperation appropriation. This thesis studies the mediation cooperation between different Finnish actors. The aim of the thesis is to gain a comprehensive understanding of the mediation field in Finland and find the gaps between best practices and the actual situation. Furthermore, to provide concrete recommendations for improving the functionality and coordination of the mediation networks. The study attempts to answer the question *how to manage mediation networks in Finland?* The primary beneficiary of the study is the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland (MFA).

Mediation is one of the most cost effective, efficient and sustainable conflict prevention and resolution methods. It is a source of international political power and public diplomacy. Furthermore, it offers a small nation an opportunity to influence and build relationships with the leading nations. The best results in mediation are gained with *networked model*. Government has a significant role in fostering mediation structures and capacity. This qualitative study applies theme interview research method. The sample group consists of seven people who represent various positions within the governmental and non-governmental organizations that operate in the field of mediation. The sampling represents a methodological mix that combines elements from intensity, purposeful and snowball sampling. The primary research data was collected in year 2015 with interviews that lasted averagely 50 minutes.

Finland is profiled as a developer of mediation structures and coordination. However, the findings reveal, that on a national level mediation networks are not properly institutionalized or coordinated. The existing expertise and capacity are not fully utilized. The lack of awareness reflects to the political will, hence, resources are allocated insufficiently to mediation efforts or to mediation capacity development. This results in competition, insufficient information sharing and availability, inconclusive coordination, and non-functional mediation structures. At the moment, the MFA manages mediation networks mainly with funding procedures. If Finland wants to be an internationally recognized mediation actor there is a need for development. The best attempt from the MFA to manage mediation networks is the national Coordination Group on Mediation (CGM). However, it is a powerless unofficial body that should be more systematic and have clear goals. The most attainable solution is to develop CGM and take advantage of information technology to overcome the challenges, to improve standards in mediation work, to benefit from the complementarity, and to manage the complexity in the field of mediation.

KEYWORDS: Mediation, Network model, Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, peace work cooperation, conflict prevention

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AU = African Union

APM = Action Plan for Mediation

CGM = national Coordination Group on Mediation

CMC = Crisis Management Centre

CSO = Civil Society Organization

EU = European Union

FCA = Finn Church Aid

FELM = Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission

FIIA = the Finnish Institute of International Affairs

FriEnt = Netzwerk Frieden und Entwicklung

GNI = Gross National Income

HIHK = Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research

MFA = Ministry for Foreign Affairs (of Finland)

NGO = Non-Governmental Organization

ODA = Open Development Aid

OSCE = Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

PDA = Private Diplomacy Actor

POL 50 = MFAs political section

TAPRI = The Tampere Peace Research Institute

UN = United Nations

WISE = Wider Security Network (former KATU = Civil Society Conflict Prevention Network)

1. INTRODUCTION

“The parties to any dispute, the continuance of which is likely to endanger the maintenance of international peace and security, shall, first of all, seek a solution by negotiation, enquiry, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, judicial settlement, resort to regional agencies or arrangements, or other peaceful means of their own choice.” (UN charter 33 art.)

This thesis studies the functionality of mediation networks in Finland. Furthermore, the purpose is to apply previous research on mediation to Finnish context. The aim of the thesis is to learn about the actual state of mediation cooperation between different Finnish actors and possibly to provide recommendations based on the findings. The primary beneficiary of the study is the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland but intermediately this thesis also benefits other actors in the field of mediation. In addition, this thesis provides information on practical processes for managing and developing the cooperation of other diplomatic networks.

This is a qualitative study and the author applies a research method that Hirsjärvi and Hurme (2008) call *theme interviews* and Patton (2002) calls *the general interview guide approach*. The topic is studied by investigating the experiences and opinions of different actors from both public and private sector organizations participating directly and indirectly in mediation processes. The interviewed sample group, that consists of seven people, represent various positions within the organizations that operate in the field of mediation. They are selected based on their experience and knowledge of the mediation field and cooperation with other actors.

Main research question is *how to manage mediation networks in Finland?* The research question is broken down to six investigative questions and further down to 51 measurement questions that form the actual interview structure (see table 4. Overlay Matrix). The findings are presented as a narrative that is structured based on the initial categories.

The thesis structure follows a typical academic research model. The first chapter provides an introduction to the topic and research problem, a short overview of the

entire research, and relevant background information. Second chapter sets forth the theoretical framework relevant to the phenomena of interest to help the reader fully understand the context and concepts. Third chapter explains in detail the qualitative research strategy and interview methodology. Fourth chapter presents the findings and observations from the interviews. Final chapter discusses the main findings and reflects and analyses those against the theory. Furthermore, it provides recommendations, suggests further research possibilities and deliberates the quality, credibility and substantive significance of this study. The thesis is done according to the writing guidelines for written work in the faculty of philosophy for the University of Vaasa (University of Vaasa 2015).

1.1. Background

This section introduces relevant concepts and background information in order to offer the reader a more comprehensive understanding of the realities that lie behind the research problem. It links diplomacy, the prevailing diplomatic situation and the future of diplomacy to the phenomena of interest and explains how they relate and affect each other. Additionally, this section explains why mediation is important in general and particularly to Finland and for small state diplomacy. Furthermore, it discusses sustainable diplomacy and public diplomacy and demonstrates that the latter is one of the main sources of soft power. Thus, it offers justification to the efforts put on mediation and to stronger input on softer crisis management and prevention. This section also explains the chosen demarcation and confirms the usefulness of the research topic itself.

The following literature review points out that there is a great need for collaborative methods in diplomatic practice. For this reason, diplomatic dialogue and practices, network management and in general communication and negotiation are essential attributes for the future. The vision of the future according to experts depicts that conflicts will increase as well as financial pressures as funding decreases. Also,

consular and economic work will increase at the MFA leaving fewer resources for traditional political diplomatic tasks like managing conflicts. This means that there is a greater need for cooperation in various sectors in the diplomatic scene, such as mediation. In addition, it means that preventive diplomacy should become an essential focus, as there will be limited resources for reactive diplomacy. This requires new techniques and processes and, above all, cooperation. The thesis argues that the main responsibility for the coordination of these networks should be a task for an official party, the MFA specifically. Most civil society organizations in Finland are tied to the government through their funding so the government already has a certain level of control over their activities and the mediation scene in that sense.

As mentioned earlier, the thesis approaches mediation from the perspective of the public official. Therefore, the official channel is first introduced, in other words, the realities in the diplomatic scene. Mediation is initially an act of diplomacy conducted by public officials, diplomats, and as such, a function of a country's external relations. Hence, mediation originates from diplomacy and diplomatic activities. It is essential to understand this link in order to understand the bigger picture. In this light, the past and present role and restraints of the public officials in regards to mediation is also necessary knowledge. Hence, next section begins with a description of diplomacy. It continues to describe the future of diplomacy and the concepts public diplomacy, soft power and sustainable diplomacy, which are all relevant to mediation. The following section introduces political conflicts and explains the current situation regarding those. It is relevant to know what the mediation networks are dealing with.

1.1.1. Diplomacy

The key elements of external relations are the strength of armed forces, financial and economic capacity, and the manpower and raw material resources. However, external relations have another important but intangible and softer side, *diplomacy*. (Otte 2005: 44.) There are many ways to define diplomacy. Diplomacy definitions either emphasize its primary purpose, which is resolving conflicts peacefully, its key actors, or its main

function, which is negotiation. (Melissen 2005b: 5.) Diplomacy guarantees the smooth conduct of foreign affairs with the use of reason, conciliation and the exchange interests. It aims to prevent major conflicts arising between sovereign states. Diplomat's function is to provide necessary information for his government and to assist in the process of adjusting conflicting interests. (Otte 2005: 46.)

The diplomatic environment, focus points and processes have changed. As a result the requirements, practices and roles in diplomacy have changed. (Tuomioja 2014: 18; Melissen 2005b: 5, 8, 12.) There are already various new non-official actors but the technological advancements and social media will bring along even more actors and institutions to the diplomatic scene. Ministries of Foreign Affairs should rethink their changing role in this light. (Hocking, Melissen, Riordan & Sharp 2012: 5.)¹ Diplomatic agendas require comprehensive solutions, international cooperation and collaboration between international civil societies where diplomats will act as facilitators and enablers. (Hocking et al. 2012: 5–7, 74–75.) In other words, structural changes are inevitable.

Still, states remain central actors in international affairs. Hence, Ministries of Foreign Affairs keep their status as well as their agents, the professional diplomats, and also remain responsible for managing their diplomatic networks. However, the scenario, roles and practices will change radically due to pressure generated by diminishing resources, globalization and regionalization as well as new actors in the diplomatic scene, new technologies, new media and new agendas. Diplomatic processes simply need to adapt to this complexity². (Ibid. 5–7, 10–13, 74–75.)

¹ 21st century diplomacy will face uncertainty and change. International travelling and globalization of firms will increase the demand for consular work, trade promotion and commercial diplomacy. This development might leave the political work insufficient particularly in areas of development aid, environment and resource security. At the same time stress on expenditure increases. Thus, E-diplomacy or virtual diplomacy grows or at least the need for it rises drastically. An innovative solution could be for instance to establish a *diplomatic reserve* that contains a wide range of international knowledge and skills

² Therefore, network management will become an essential diplomatic skill. Influencing agendas and framing debates will be crucial in order to succeed in diplomacy. This requires understanding and adaptation to changing diplomatic communication patterns. This means that governments need to take full advantage of their knowledge assets and persuasion abilities, for instance, with the help of social media tools. This means that governments need to take full advantage of their knowledge assets and persuasion

The importance of traditional power politics has declined due to the fact that force and intimidation increasingly fail to bring the desired results (Tuomioja 2014: 19). The importance of *soft power*, ‘the power over opinion’, in addition to hard power has been realized in international politics. The loss of it can damage the hard power capacity but also the international credibility and attractiveness of a country. “Public diplomacy is one of soft power’s key instruments.”³ The difference between traditional diplomacy and *public diplomacy* is that the former is about relationships between the representatives of states or other international actors, whereas the latter targets the general public in foreign societies and more specific non-official groups, organizations and individuals. Public diplomacy covers diplomatic activities such as image promotion, reputation management, identity creation and propaganda. This is also called nation branding, which is a necessary activity and can be seen as one of the central sources of nation’s power. (Melissen 2005b: 3–5.)⁴

Diplomacy is operative in a network environment rather than the hierarchical state-centric model of international relations. Public diplomacy is a vital element for such collaborative model of diplomacy. (Ibid. 5, 8, 12.)⁵ International actors have to engage in dialogue with foreign audiences as a condition of success in foreign policy (Ibid. 13–14). Public diplomacy strategies have to be integrated into policymaking and this should

tools. Public diplomacy strategies have to be integrated into policymaking and public diplomacy should be a function for the Foreign Ministries. (Hocking et al. 2012: 5–7, 10–13, 74–75, 79.)

³ *Cultural diplomacy* is a prime example of soft power. For example, the effect of American movies on public opinion about the US is cultural diplomacy. But it is often dismissed as too soft and peripheral to real issues of policy. (Melissen 2005a: xvii–xxi.)

⁴ Nation-branding, propaganda and foreign cultural relations are related concepts with public diplomacy, yet there is a difference. They all include “communication of information and ideas to foreign publics with a view to changing their attitudes towards the originating country or reinforcing existing beliefs.” However, modern public diplomacy is two-way communication that persuades by dialogue and not only one-way messaging like propaganda. Still, public diplomacy is practiced from the home countries interests and goals in mind. Furthermore, nation-branding requires much more and better coordinated effort than public diplomacy. It is also limited to existing social realities such as country’s identity and aspirations, thus it is also about reshaping a country’s self-image. Still, both public diplomacy and nation-branding focus on foreign perception. (Melissen 2005b: 16–21.)

⁵ The world is increasingly interdependent (Tuomioja 2014: 18). It has become increasingly important to influence world opinion. Public diplomacy has become particularly essential in diplomatic relations if regions have a lot of economic and/or political interdependence or connections in civil society. In general, domestic and international communication with the public has become an increasingly complex challenge for foreign ministries. (Melissen 2005b: 11–13.)

be a function for the Foreign Ministries (Hocking et al. 2012: 74–75). However, diplomats are not the best to communicate with the public because of the biases and trust issues. Therefore public diplomacy needs non-governmental agents from the own country's civil society and local networks in target countries. (Melissen 2005b: 16–21.)

Diplomacy should be durable and the use of force hinders durable relationships, even though it is occasionally necessary (Constantinou & Derian 2010: 2). Sustainable Diplomacy requires commitment to be in dialogue with various conversation partners. In other words, *sustainable diplomacy* is a process of promoting relations, which go beyond the traditional and somewhat exclusive contacts between human elites. (Wellman 2010: 25, 38–39.)⁶ Nowadays, non-state actors are becoming empowered 'diplomats' and militants through multiple networked media platforms. Thus, it is necessary for the traditional actors to create and extend their global networks of knowledge and authority for a sustainable future diplomacy. (Constantinou & Derian 2010: 8–13, 15, 18–19.)⁷

1.1.2. Political conflicts

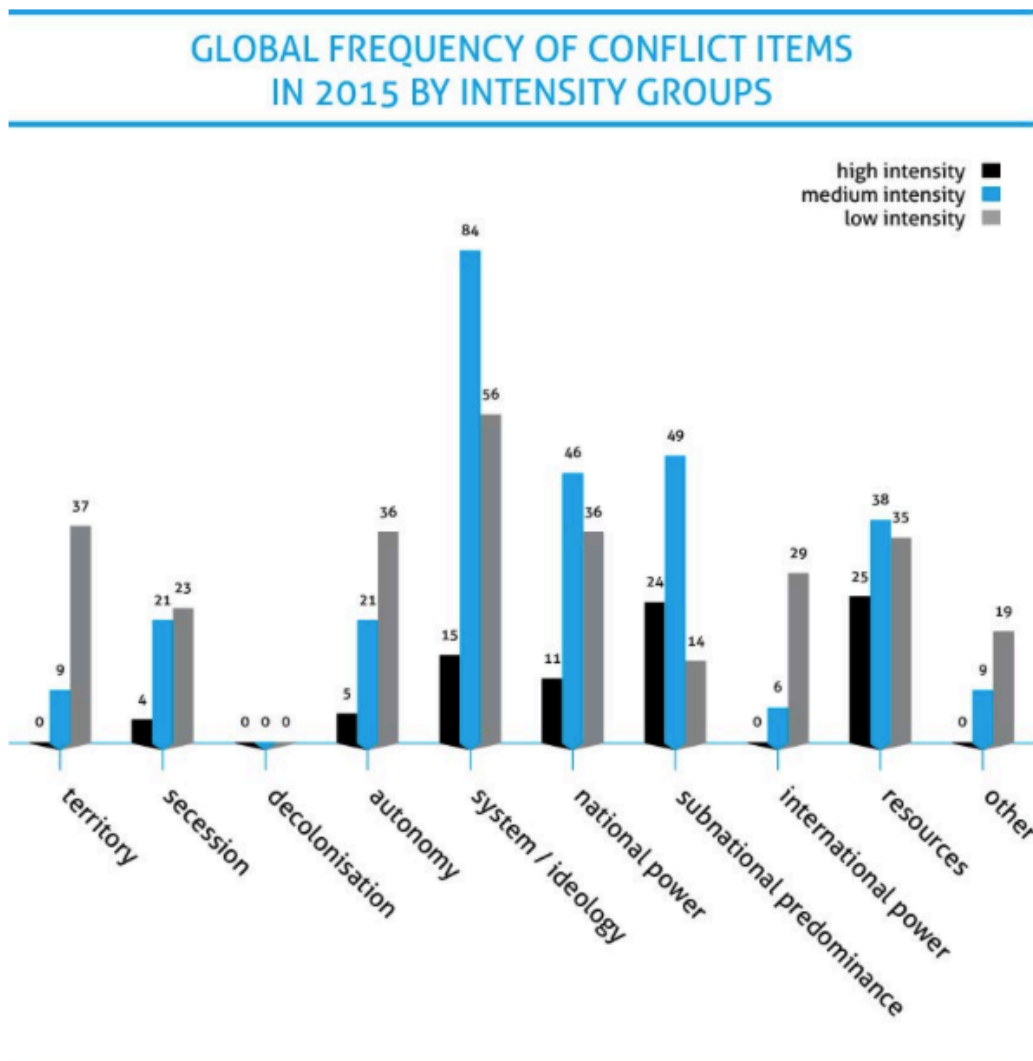
Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research (HIK) defines *political conflict* as incompatible intentions between individuals or social groups. These incompatibilities develop from the presence of actors, the measures they take, and the issues that cause differences between them. Simply put, political conflicts comprise of three elements: actors, measures, and issues. Conflict actors take measures to pursue issues that are either material or immaterial. The conflict issues are commonly categorized in ten

⁶ Modern diplomatic system is considered exclusionary and biased. Sovereignty might be used as a tool to disempower and discard one party from official diplomacy and decision making, unless and until other sovereign states give them the diplomatic recognition as sovereign. In this light, the modern diplomatic system can be thought to support the dominant forms of governance rather than more sustainable forms of diplomacy, such as inclusion of all relevant parties. (Constantinou & Derian 2010: 8–13, 15, 18–19.)

⁷ For instance, the struggle against international terrorism and nation-building require the collaboration of a broad range of foreign governments, particularly governments in Islamic or receiving countries. If tackling the major security issues requires collaboration at a global level with both governmental and non-governmental agencies, and if stable and effective collaboration can be secured only through engagement with broader foreign societies, public diplomacy becomes a fundamental, not just presentational, part of the policy-making process. Increasingly in the 21st century, diplomacy will be public diplomacy. (Riordan 2005: 180–187.)

items, which are illustrated according to their frequency by intensity groups in table 1 below. Four reasons behind conflicts clearly stand out. Evidently, system and ideology, national power, subnational predominance, and resources based conflicts are most common. (Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research 2016: 6.)

Table 1. Global Frequency of Conflict Items in 2015 by Intensity Groups (Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research 2016: 16).



Furthermore, there are many reasons that cause and sustain violent conflicts. For instance,

“there is a large number of fragile states with weak institutions and limited capacity to carry out basic state functions in the areas of security, inclusive and responsive governance, and civil administration; there is growing social inequality within states and globally between states and regions; and there is an increasing capacity of criminal and terrorist networks and other non-state actors to utilize the instruments of globalization to undermine peace and security.” (Ahtisaari & Rintakoski 2013: 338)

Intensity of a conflict is an essential attribute to follow. Conflicts are categorized according to their intensity into violent and non-violent conflicts with a five level model (from least to worst): dispute, non-violent crisis, violent crisis, limited war, and war. Dispute is considered as the only intensity level where there is not even a threat of violence. (Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research 2016: 7.) Furthermore, conflicts can be divided into interstate, intrastate, and substate conflicts. Table 2. below illustrates the number of each according to their intensity level. Interstate conflicts involve state actors, intrastate conflicts (civil) involve both state actors and non-state actors, and substate conflicts take place only between non-state actors. (Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research 2016: 6–8.)

Table 2. Number of inter-, intra-, and substate conflicts in 2015 by intensity level (Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research 2015: 15).

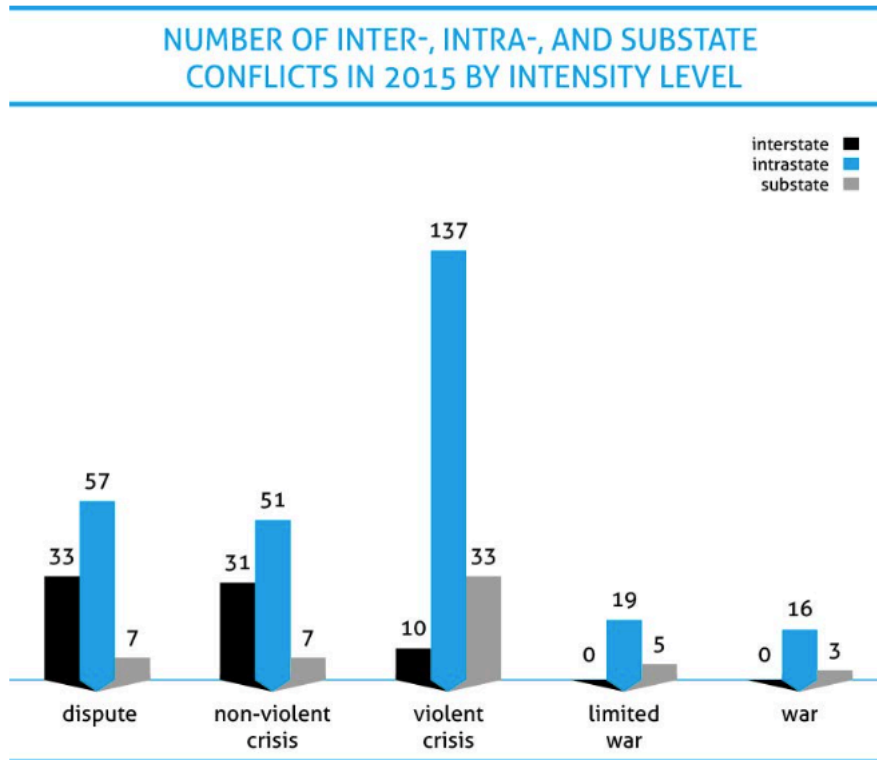
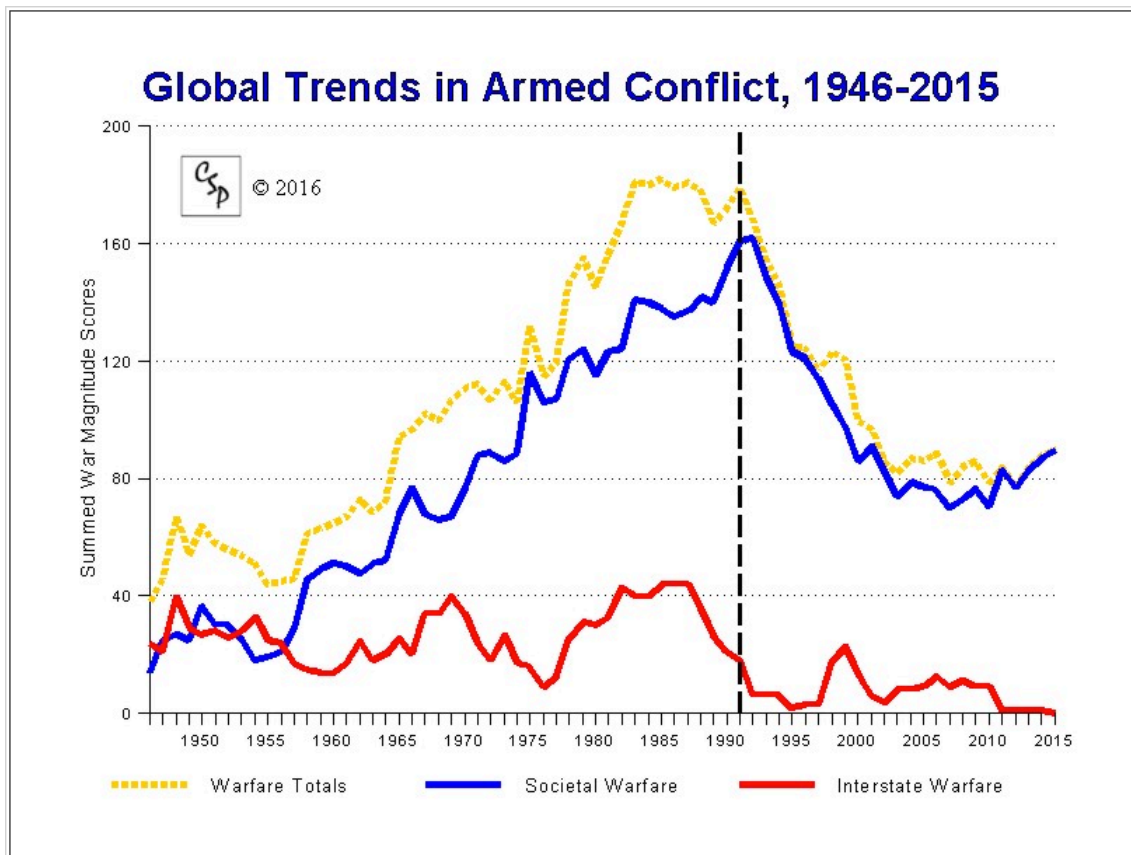


Table 2. above evidences that conflicts today are mostly intrastate. This has been the case since World War II (see also table 3.). Furthermore, the number of continuing conflicts has decreased since the end of the Cold War, conflict intensity has declined since World War II, and the democracy level is higher than ever before. (Buhaug, Gates, Hegre & Strand 2007: 1–4.) Up to now. It seems that this trend has ended. According to Uppsala Conflict Data Program there has been a significant increase in recent years in fatalities caused by armed conflicts, and that year 2014 was deadliest since the end of the Cold War. Distinctively, there is an increase in conflicts between non-state actors and violence targeting civilians. (Melander 2015: 9.) Research conducted by HIIK reveals that global conflict intensities in 2015 compared to 2014 looks almost the same in numbers. (Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research 2015: 14.) Table 3. demonstrates the Global Trends in Armed Conflicts between 1946–2015. The direction is clearly upwards from early 2000 onwards. According to Center for Systemic Peace,

the increase is mostly in Muslim countries and in the Arab region. (Center for Systemic Peace 2016)

Table 3. Global Trends in Armed Conflict, 1946–2015 (Center for Systemic Peace 2016).



Conflicts develop according to a *conflict cycle* from structural problems into violence and through transformation back to peaceful societal change. However, conflicts do not always follow that cyclical order. The violence can be avoided completely when the conflict situation goes directly into transformation. Furthermore, conflicts do not have regular and linear escalation and tail off periods. Instead, for instance civil wars can be divided into several nested sub-conflicts that have different escalation and de-escalation phases simultaneously. (Nissinen 2014a: 15)

1.2. Problem setting

The main research problem what the thesis attempts to examine is *how to manage mediation networks in Finland?* The topic is approached from the public officials perspective, more specifically, the Ministry for the Foreign Affairs of Finland. The thesis assumes that they are the primary beneficiaries of this study. With the results, the author aims to understand the Finnish mediation scene and expose the processes regarding cooperation and coordination between the different actors. In addition, this thesis attempts to discover the aspects that could be improved by comparing the answers from the interviews and the best practices found at the literature review part of the thesis. Furthermore, the goal is to produce development recommendations based on those findings with the intention that the government of Finland (MFA) can better benefit from the mediation networks.

The main research question is broken into six investigative questions:

- Q1. What are the background, experience and level of involvement of the respondent in relation to mediation?
- Q2. How is the cooperation between different mediation actors in the respondent's case and on a national level?
- Q3. How is the communication and information sharing in the field of mediation?
- Q4. How is Finland's mediation scene and the support network relating to it?
- Q5. What is the role of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in mediation activities?
- Q6. What improvement suggestions do the respondents offer for the coordination of mediation networks within Finland?

The investigative questions are used as themes for the basis of designing the interview frame and the actual measurement questions for the interview (see appendix 1 & 2). The following overlay matrix elaborates the connections between the investigative questions, measurement questions, theoretical frame of reference, and the findings.

Table 4. Overlay matrix.

How to manage mediation networks in Finland?			
Investigative Question	Measurement Questions (see Appendix 1 & 2)	Theoretical Frame of Reference (chapter)	Findings (chapter)
Q1. What is the background, experience and level of involvement of the respondent in relation to mediation?	1–8	1.3., 2.1.1., 2.2.3., 2.3.-2.3.2.	Appendix 3.
Q2. How is the cooperation between different mediation actors in the respondent's case and on a national level?	9–31	2.3.	4.1.
Q3. How is the communication and information sharing in the field of mediation?	32–43	1.1.1., 2.3.2.-2.3.3.	4.1.3.–4.1.5.
Q4. How is Finland's mediation scene and the support network relating to it?	44–48	2.2.1.–2.2.3., 2.3.3.	4.2.
Q5. What is the role of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in mediation activities?	49–51	1.1.1., 2.1.1., 2.2.1.-2.2.3, 2.3.3.	4.3.
Q6. What improvement suggestions do the respondents offer for the coordination of mediation networks within Finland?	20, 25–29, 31, 36–37, 40, 47–48, 50–51, most questions are intended to yield answers to this	2.2.1., 2.2.4., 2.3.-2.3.3.	4.1.9.

1.3. Limitations of the study

The focus of the thesis is on mediation cooperation between third parties involved in the process such as the mediator, their background organizations and, importantly, also the other contributors in the civil society and government. To focus only on actual mediation and on those who do just that, would be too narrow for this research and would not take into consideration the great amount of work of those many organizations that work in the area of mediation indirectly and possibly even in the unofficial dialogues. For this reason, the thesis focuses on the entire mediation scene in Finland including the organizations that are only intermediately involved. At the same time, the limited resources of the researcher force to refrain from conducting an international study. Hence, this study is demarcated to Finnish actors.

Chapter 1.1.1. explains that the mediation scene is nowadays more complex with both official and unofficial actors acting on varying mandates and agendas. For this reason and in order to avoid unnecessary problems, overlapping work, and to take advantage of the potential in this multilevel (multi-track) system, there seems to be a greater need to manage and control these actions better in the future. Therefore, this thesis studies the cooperation between the different actors in Finland. The aim is to discover how to best utilize and coordinate these mediation networks. Through that, how to potentially improve the Finnish mediation activities.

Based on the preliminary literature review, the researcher makes a hypothesis that mediation is the best way to solve and prevent conflicts. Mediation seems to be the most cost effective conflict solving method in the long-term when done correctly. Partly due to that, and due to the public diplomacy and soft power aspect, mediation is also a developing sector in Finland and seen as the future mode of operation and a prospective element for Finland's foreign policy. Conversely, the current government drastically cut

down the funding for development cooperation and mediation. That makes the chosen topic even more interesting to inspect closer.

That being said, it is necessary to point out, that there are also other very effective conflict management tools, both peaceful ones and methods that are based on use of force. The organizations that focus on those can be considered to link to mediation but as a separate focus point they would extend the scope of study too much. However, the researcher has limited resources to conduct a broader study that would cover all the conflict management aspects and methods. Hence, this thesis is demarcated only on mediation and on its support networks. To be explicit, this thesis does not study peace work any broader than what relates to mediation and does not include development cooperation in general nor military or civil based crisis management as such.

Furthermore, this thesis is primarily interested in the MFA's role in mediation. What was formerly considered as official diplomat duties is now a complicated field of representatives from many levels and also unofficial origins. Based on the literature review (chapter 1.1.1. & 2.3.), the author discovered, that the cooperation between different mediation actors is critical but is not always smooth and in fact contains problematic issues. Therefore, the initial hypothesis is that the existing mediation networks, both governmental and non-governmental, could be better utilized and managed by the public officials with effective coordination. Furthermore, the literature in chapter 1.1.1. suggests that the coordination of these networks should be primarily the responsibility of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, and that cooperation will be a prerequisite for effective and efficient diplomacy, and for successfulness of foreign policy goals in the future.

There are many beneficiaries for this research. Government of Finland, more specifically the MFA, is seen as the main beneficiary but intermediately also the civil society organization's (CSO's) in mediation or in mediation support activities and the CSO's that do development cooperation work in general can benefit from better structures and coordination. Additionally, any actors from larger international

organizations to individual researchers in the field of mediation can benefit from improved coordination. That can lead to, for instance, better access to information and useful contacts, which surely makes the work easier, faster and increases the quality.

The focus group needs to be similar enough to provide comparable and credible results. In this research the experience and knowledge of the mediation field is seen as an adequate combining factor. The experience is a relative concept and not strictly set to, for example, a certain amount of years but to information richness. Moreover, the respondents cannot be categorized into clear groups to represent just governmental or non-governmental views as many have work experience from both. For instance, some government representatives might be actively participating in the activities of certain national CSO's or have gained experience from an international organization. This itself is a good thing as the respondents truly have broad perspectives on the topic. This makes their information richer and even more valuable to the research.

Furthermore, the various experts, institutions and civil society organizations can range from one person to sizeable international organizations but they can all be considered as valuable contributors to the research. For this reason, the research does not exclude respondents based on the size of their current organization. That does not play a role when the respondent's experiences and expertise can still provide the desired information. One can gain the knowledge as an expert through extensive work experience in various or in just one organization that is involved in mediation indirectly. Also, evidently in Finland the circles in the field of mediation are so small that the various actors interact with each other in many occasions and gain more knowledge through that as well. Many of the actors have been in several positions in different governmental and non-governmental organizations and gained a good overview of the industry and a broad understanding of the entire mediation scene from different perspectives. In other words, the size or the international reach of the organization itself that the respondent represents does not matter when drafting and compiling a homogenous enough of a respondent group.

2. THERORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter presents the theory related to the research topic. As pointed out in the previous chapter, public diplomacy is a prerequisite for soft power. Also the importance of networking for future diplomatic practice is discussed. Furthermore, this chapter explains Finland's role in mediation and introduces Finland's action plan for mediation, government programme and peace mediation guidelines. It also covers the background for Finland's need to maintain its soft power and nation-brand in the eyes of the international community. Shortly, to get international recognition as a humanitarian and peaceful country and to remain sovereign, mediation is one essential tool for Finland and has been that ever since its independence. Mediation in general is an important part of sustainable diplomacy, exemplary case of transnational cooperation and leverage for public diplomacy.

The research and theory will concentrate on Finland's mediation networks and how they are and should be managed. More specifically, the theory will concentrate on cooperation and coordination between different mediation actors and briefly go through what actors are there in Finland in mediation field and what is the role of Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland in all this.

To gain a comprehensive understanding, the theory also has some comparison of different Nordic countries, the US and Switzerland and their different ways of dealing with mediation. For example, Norway has a separate mediation unit in the MFA, the US has excellent and very influential public diplomacy though disadvantage of large state and biases in mediation process, and the Switzerland has separate mediation unit at the MFA and is truly independent mediation actor and seen as unbiased because it has no EU restrictions.

2.1. Conflict prevention

Conflict prevention can be defined concisely or broadly. The concise definition covers various forms of preventive diplomacy, such as, third party mediation or economic or military intervention. The broader term includes the actions to identify and peacefully change the structures that cause or maintain the conflict. Then we talk about *structural conflict prevention*, *peacebuilding* or *peace work*. Preventive actions can focus on, for instance, economical inequality, discrimination of minorities, corruption or criminal activity that lies behind the conflict. *Peacebuilding* generally refers to reducing structural and cultural violence and restoring societal structures after the peace agreement is made for example by supporting social and economical development, good governance, justice and security sector reforms and longer term reconciliation. *Reconciliation* deals with the psychosocial traumas caused by the violent conflicts and building trust so that peaceful coexistence could be possible. (Nissinen 2014a: 19-21.) *Peacemaking*, *peace process*, *peace formation*, *peace building* or *conflict resolution* all refer to the broader peace process but they differ in comprehensiveness. In other words, does the peace process end when an agreement is reached or does sustainable peace require more. (Lehti & Saarinen 2014: 25–27.)

The national infrastructure is a significant factor in sustainable conflict prevention. There should be “effective systems, processes and institutions for managing disputes, addressing grievances and responding to conflict. Democratic governance and participatory decision-making processes strengthen the foundations for these capacities”. There should be national conflict prevention mechanisms and cooperative platforms that enable dialogue among all stakeholders to increase the country’s capacity to prevent and resolve domestic and foreign conflicts. The practices should be based on the idea of strong CSO participation and influence. (Barnes 2006: 22.)

Previously, the perspective to *conflict management* stressed state security, sovereignty and status quo. The state centred peace negotiations aimed to prevent and reduce violence especially with official diplomacy, threatening with armed attack, defence

alliances and economic pressure. However, conflicts are dynamic processes where you have to acknowledge also the direct, cultural and structural violence. Negative peace is reached when there is no direct physical violence but positive peace requires active change in the cultural and structural violence and integration of the human society. Thus, a new term, *conflict resolution*, was introduced. That refers to a normative goal to change a violent conflict into non-violent. (Nissinen 2014a: 14)

Since then the perception of security has broadened. *Human security* includes securing the physical existence of the people and communities but also social and economic prosperity and human rights promotion. Lately the term *conflict transformation* is used more. That focuses on changing the institutions behind the conflict that create the hostile relations, negative discourses and violence. This paradigm has become more common in mediation activity. (Nissinen 2014a: 15.)

Other essential conflict resolution terms that relate particularly to third party actions are *preventive diplomacy*, which is the focus in this thesis, *peacemaking* that aims for peace agreement, *peacekeeping* to produce security, and *post-conflict peacebuilding* to instill the peace after the agreement. *Peacekeeping*, *peace enforcement* and *humanitarian intervention* all entail use of force to resolve a conflict. (Nissinen 2014a: 19, 22.) As a conclusion, the conflict prevention terms have broadened substantially throughout the times and they are considered to overlap, particularly in the comprehensive approach that will be introduced later in this chapter.

Furthermore, international, regional and civil society's *early warning systems* are an important part of conflict prevention. There are many systems that warn about violent conflicts but in general their purpose is to collect systematically information, which is used as a basis for estimating the vastness and timing of the risk in future threats, the nature of them, and possible scenarios but also to warn decision makers. (Nissinen 2014a: 20.) Nick Grono defines *early warning systems* concisely as "systems that rigorously and systematically track indicators that correlate to increased risk of conflict". According to Nick Grono (Nick Grono 2008: 450), there are plenty of early

warning indicators and even systems to interpret them available. But the actual problem is, in fact, lack of political will. In reality, early warning does not mean effective and timely response.

According to Catherine Barnes, governments and international organizations response to conflicts often happens when the conflict situation has already escalated into crisis. “The goal should be to move ‘from reaction to prevention’.” (Barnes 2006: 13.) However, international conflict resolution is suffering from what Nissinen calls ‘tyranny of the moment’. This means that, resources are more rarely directed to potential conflict prevention than to managing acute conflicts where the results are easier and faster to measure. Nevertheless, Nissinen claims, that this practise is changing and that nowadays the primary function of international conflict resolution is considered to be anticipating conflicts and preventing them before the escalation. (Nissinen 2014a: 19.)

Finland applies a comprehensive strategy for crisis management, also known as holistic or integrated strategy. This comprehensive approach means that all resources available to the international community can be considered as possible means of solving the crisis. In practise this means extended cooperation among various actors from different levels, and viewing them as a whole, one entity, for example, the military, police or mediation organization, as well as, different political segments such as security, commercial and development policy. In Finland the comprehensive approach has been emphasized in foreign policy statements and in connection with crises management and mediation. (Ibid. 13, 15–16.) This indicates, that Finland would have effective national infrastructure for responding to conflict. However, Barnes questions the mechanisms and processes that are supposed to facilitate multi-sectoral cooperation in complex conflicts as each participant is specialized in something and that affects and limits their viewpoint. (Barnes 2006: 12.) In other words, she questions the entire comprehensive approach.

Even though the general atmosphere towards conflict prevention is said to move from reaction to prevention, in Finland this does not seem to be the case at the moment. It is

announced, that Finland will invest tens of billions of euros to replace its fighter aircrafts in the coming years. Yet, according to experts, that investment is not sufficient to secure Finland in a full-scale war. (Niemi 2016a). Furthermore, the life cycle costs of those fighter planes can increase exponentially to the original selling price and it is the tax payers that need to deal with the costs in the end (Niemi 2016b). Should this money be invested in preventive conflict management methods, for example to mediation, it would be interesting to see what could be done with the same money and what would be the results.

According to a video CMI released, the military expenditure worldwide per day is 4 billion euros. One peace negotiation round costs 40 000 euros. This means that just one days military costs equals 100 000 peace negotiation rounds. (CMI 2016.) This gives reason to doubt whether conflict prevention really is on the top of the list of important issues in general. Moreover, in Finland there is plenty of cooperation in military defence sector and political will to develop that further, for instance, the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) with the EU and Nordic Defence Cooperation (NORDEF). (Ministry of Defence 2016a; Ministry of Defence 2016b.) However, the peaceful and preventive methods are lacking the same enthusiasm and resources in Finland and actually suffered from major financial cuts with the current government. Again, this brings a question that is preventive diplomacy really imprinted in Finland's foreign policy and is the comprehensive approach truly practiced as it should be, that is, evenly and cooperatively.

2.1.1. Actors and their roles in conflict prevention

“The most sustainable approach to resolving conflict is to ensure all partners are involved” (Ferrero-Waldner 2008: 50).

Catherine Barnes (2006: 11–12.) stresses the importance of local ownership and responsibility in conflict prevention. That is the key to legitimate and sustainable results. According to her, the role of outsiders is to support the existing capacities by encouraging inclusiveness, building forums, and enabling those directly involved to

make the decisions regarding their situation and the resolution. General rule is not to promote short-term objectives at the expense of long-term prevention. Furthermore, outsiders should address the conflict causes that are located ‘elsewhere’, such as arms suppliers or harmful policies that foreign governments support. In addition, public campaigning is important as the public opinion contributes to designing the foreign policy. Though, how much weight the foreign policy gets depends on competing issues, such as healthcare or tax reforms. Furthermore, the government might not take an active role due to political reasons, such as crossing an ally.

“Institutionalising prevention at a national level may require a thorough review of government policies and practices, its institutional arrangements and capacities, and the allocation of budgetary resources to ensure that they are consistent with a prevention ethos.” (Barnes 2006: 22)

The following guideline lists nine concrete points how governments can institutionalize conflict prevention at a national level.

1. Form a ministry or a department for peace.
2. Start inter-ministerial councils and units within or across relevant government agencies. These units could include civil society liaison officers.
3. Develop formal institutional arrangements for cooperation between governments and CSO’s through policy dialogue, research, and the development and implementation of specific programmes.
4. Examine innovative mechanisms that already exist and build on good practice.
5. Strengthen channels for policy dialogue on topics that relate to the structural causes of conflict at home and abroad.
6. Develop conflict prevention policies that oblige governments to commit to civil society partnerships.
7. Ensure that monitoring mechanisms and funding for both partnership and planning exercises are incorporated into policies.
8. Develop civilian contact database, rosters, of available personnel.
9. Develop civilian peace services. (Barnes 2006: 22)

It is clear, that civil society actors have a significant role in conflict prevention. Barnes defines *civil society* as the social relations between the state, the market, and the private life of families and individuals. Civil society is connected with the concept of *social capital*. That refers to “values, traditions and networks that enable coordination and cooperation between people”. Civil society appears as various associations “from officially constituted institutions to small, informal community groups.” They represent and reflect the needs, interests and values of its members but also how the society members express, mobilize and pursuit their objectives. Therefore, “civil society groups can be a factor in war as well as a force for peace.” (Barnes 2006: 5.) For this reason, a comprehensive approach to conflict prevention is necessary.

The figure 1. below illustrates different types of civil society groupings, which all have had an important role in responding to conflict. Evidently, the term civil society refers to more than just public benefit non-governmental organizations (NGO). However, NGO's do have an essential role in working with conflict. They offer services and support change with their technical-professional skills. (Barnes 2006: 7.) This distinction between CSO's and NGO's is good to note when reading this thesis.



Figure 1. Possible civil society groupings (Barnes 2006: 7).

A conflict hinders and constrains CSO's operations by weakening the civil society. An authoritarian government might constrict the civil society and pressure them to conform. For this reason, the long-term objective should be to strengthen an independent civil society. Furthermore, conflicts can polarize groups so that CSO's start taking sides. Thus, security and predictability are the cornerstones of a prosperous civil society. Government's role is to ensure that with the rule of law. This is most effective in a democratic state. "Thus, civil society and democratic states are highly complementary and even interdependent." (Barnes 2006: 7–8.)

However, the potential in the civil society is very little used because often there is no systematic working procedures or effective practices (Ibid. 7–8). The following table 5. elucidates CSO roles at different stages of the conflict cycle and presents CSO and government cooperation possibilities.

Table 5. CSO roles at different stages of the conflict cycle (Barnes 2006: 8–9).

CSO roles at different stages of the conflict cycle		
Conflict cycle stage	Do what – action	How – examples of concrete action
Structural prevention to address the causes of conflict		
	1. Addressing structural violence & promoting human security	development, human rights monitoring & promotion, preventing environmental degradation
	2. Making governments & state structures more responsive	participation in political processes, policy dialogue, monitoring, advocacy campaigns, protests
	3. Alleviating social tensions and conflict	challenging xenophobia and discrimination, facilitating dialogue, promoting tolerance and a culture of peace
	4. Strengthening capacities to mediate conflict and manage differences	conflict resolution training, mediation services, education, promoting rule of law
Early operational crisis response and during violent conflict		
	5. Early warning of emerging crises	monitoring, analysis, and communication strategies to raise awareness and generate attention
	6. Developing options and strategies for	formulating

	response	recommendations, engaging in policy dialogue, problem-solving workshops
	7. Mobilizing political will for response	lobbying and campaigning, sensitizing domestic audiences
	8. Developing & strengthening ‘constituencies for peace’	public awareness work, facilitating social dialogue, public protests
	9. Creating ‘zones of peace’	violence reduction and monitoring
	10. Humanitarian relief	support to war-affected communities
Peacemaking		
	11. Facilitating communication and generating alternatives	Track II dialogue processes
	12. Creating a ‘pragmatic peace’ at the local level, strengthening local CSO capacities for conflict transformation & peacebuilding	public dialogue
	13. Developing a negotiation agenda and vision for the future that addresses the causes and consequences of conflict	
	14. Participating in the political negotiations	
	15. Facilitating & mediating political negotiations process	
Preventing reoccurrence and post-settlement peacebuilding		
	16. Public education & awareness-raising on the peace agreement and consolidating support	

	17. Laying the groundwork for reconciliation	facilitating the rehabilitation of war-affected relationships & communities
	18. Contributing to transitional justice processes	
	19. Resumption of initiatives contributing to structural prevention	encouraging good governance, reconstruction and development, mediating social conflict, promoting human rights

2.2. Mediation

According to CMI, “Mediation and dialogue are recognised as the most effective ways of preventing, managing, and resolving violent conflicts” and building sustainable peace (CMI 2016).

“Mediation is an instrument for international diplomacy and conflict resolution” (Ahtisaari & Rintakoski 2013: 338). *Mediation* in this thesis refers to a “method used in peaceful third-party interventions in crisis management and conflict resolution” (Brummer & Piiparinen 2012: 9). Another definition, “mediation is a process whereby a third party assists two or more parties, with their consent, to prevent, manage or resolve a conflict by helping them to develop mutually acceptable agreements” (Lehti & Saarinen 2014: 19). The latter definition points out that mediation as such is a too broad term. Mediation can refer to “commonplace practise in a variety of domains, such as commercial, legal, diplomatic, workplace, community and family matters”. This means that mediation is not limited to conflicts between states or to armed conflicts but this thesis is only interested in mediation as a part of a peace process to end or prevent conflicts. (Ibid. 18.)

Thus, Lehti and Saarinen use a more specific term, *peace mediation*. It is defined specifically as “an intervention by a third party in a conflict to support, in peaceful ways, the achievement of peace, and this kind of mediation can take different forms at different stages of the peace process”. (Lehti & Saarinen 2014: 15.) Even though this more specific term describes better the meaning and the use of the term for the purpose of this thesis, the UN and the MFA use the broader term mediation. That is considered as an official reference and for that reason the shorter term, mediation, is used.

The scope of mediation extends to both inter-state and intra-state wars but also to armed conflicts among non-governmental parties (Ibid. 18). The mediation process consists of four phases: pre-talks, talks, agreement and implementation (Brummer & Piiparinen 2012: 10). In the minimal version, third party mediation can mean supporting the negotiation process and physically organizing it without an actual role in the negotiations. This is called facilitation. In facilitation the third party can act as a messenger, offer good services or just provide premises for the dialogue. (Nissinen 2014a: 17)

Mediation is a useful tool for the entire duration of a conflict cycle from prevention to control and resolution (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland of Finland 2016a). Furthermore, mediation has increased its popularity as a mean of conflict prevention and resolution (Nissinen 2014a: 12). Still, it is only one aspect and practice in the broader process of *peacemaking*, *peace process*, *peace formation*, *peace building*, or *conflict resolution* (Lehti & Saarinen 2014: 25).

In addition, there are also other forms of peaceful third party intervention as well as intervention forms based on use of force (Nissinen 2014a: 13). Mediation is similar to negotiation, inquiry, conciliation, arbitration and judicial settlement. However, it is less binding than arbitration and judicial settlement, as mediators have no authority to make decisions for the disputants and the control of the outcome is primarily in the hands of the dispute parties. The parties do not have to consent to a third party decision based on

legal obligations, which makes the ultimate resolution more sustainable. Unlike negotiation, mediation is unbiased. (Brummer & Piiparinen 2012: 9, 15.)

Third party mediation is utilized when the counterparties have agreed to discuss their differences but are unable to get past the problems and come to a solution. Then a mediator that is trusted by all conflict parties can help to overcome the issues. (Ahtisaari & Rintakoski 2013: 338.) In addition, mediation is declared in the UN charter's Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of Disputes as one of the preferred peaceful means to end a dispute. This article 33 was adopted in 1982. However, in practice the political realities determine whether peaceful means are used in a particular conflict situation. (Brummer & Piiparinen 2012: 14–15; UN Charter 33 art.)

Twice as many wars end today through negotiation rather than military victory. That development has happened since the end of the Cold War. Within the years 1988 to 2003 more wars ended through negotiation than in the previous two centuries. This gives reason to conclude that the mediation efforts yield concrete results. (Coleman 2012: 65–66.) However, permanent solutions require addressing the underlying political, economic and social problems. Mediation supports that by enabling the formation of political, economic and social institutions and by creating a framework for the parties to work on the issues agreed upon. (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland of Finland 2016a; Ahtisaari & Rintakoski 2013: 347)

Mediation success used to be measured by a five-year renewing period. New measurement approaches focus on longer-term sustainable peace building and how justice is executed in the conflict resolution. (Lehti & Saarinen 2014: 29.) In order to succeed, mediation needs to have a clear goal. Without an objective the long talks produce few or no results. (Ahtisaari & Rintakoski 2013: 341.) Furthermore, to ensure that mediation is successful, there needs to be clear guidelines for all the parties based on indepth knowledge of the situation. Who monitors them is another matter. One of the key factors for success is persistently the leverage received from the support of states and intergovernmental organizations. (Ibid. 2013: 349)

Mediation can be practiced by a single person such as Martti Ahtisaari, a non-governmental organization such as CMI, a state such as Norway, a regional body such as AU, or an international body such as the UN (Lehti & Saarinen 2014: 30). Furthermore, also transnational non-governmental organizations, multinational corporations and international organizations can play a role in mediation (Ahtisaari & Rintakoski 2013: 349). The terms track I and II differentiate between governmental and non-governmental diplomacy, which is also referred to as unofficial mediation or private diplomacy. The terms also indicate that mediation and dialogue should take place at different levels of society. (Ibid. 339.)

According to Ahtisaari and Rintakoski (Ahtisaari & Rintakoski 2013: 339), “only the UN can mediate start-up and manage peacekeeping operation, raise funds and deliver humanitarian assistance, and lead a process for longer-term reconstruction and development”. In addition, “the UN is the only actor that can effectively regulate the mediation market by standards, codes of conduct, and basic principles of good mediation practice”. However, it is not the main actor what comes to operational part. Then again the regional organizations, such as EU, OSCE, ASEAN and AU are increasingly active in mediation, which strengthens the general capacity of the mediation.

Furthermore, as demonstrated in part 1.1.1., states continue to be significant actors in mediation. States have a motive to mediate conflicts particularly when those arise in their region or if their own interests are threatened. In addition, for small states mediation provides a public diplomacy tool. “A country can become known, admired, and also rewarded for its peace efforts, which increase prestige and influence.” (Ibid. 339.) The non-governmental actors role in particular, is often to probe for negotiation opportunities, bringing the parties together in an informal manner before the official process, training the parties or clarifying the civil society’s wishes (Nissinen 2014a: 17–18).

There can be also negative consequences with mediation. Under one-third of mediation attempts succeed in achieving a solution. (Jaarva, Joenpolvi & Wigell 2012: 102.) Over one-fourth of the wars that end through negotiations relapse into violence within five years. It is said that civil wars are more likely to experience renewed violence. Also, the longer the conflict lasts, the likeliness of recurrence of war increases. In cases where mediation fails the states experience a new downward spin. In some cases, there are more casualties after peace agreements are endorsed and then failed. (Coleman 2012: 65–66.) Furthermore, peace processes might result in negative peace where there is no direct physical violence but the tense situation meant to be temporary stands still and new problems can easily arise. The ceasefires might also be used to arm and reorganize the warring parties. (Jaarva et al. 2012: 102.) Moreover, mediation might unintentionally legitimize the warring armed groups because mediation often requires engagement with them. Thus, the peace process might reward violence by providing recognition to these non-democratic groups. At the same time, it sends a message to other groups to use violence to gain influence. (Brummer & Piiparinen 2012: 102.)

Third-party mediators are commonly expected to be neutral. However, they are not neutral or impartial and an attempt to keep that image is almost impossible. It is important to realize the difference between bias towards issues or parties. Mediator can have opinions regarding the issues but be neutral towards the parties. If a mediator would be completely neutral or had no influence, they would be useless in protecting peace and unnecessary. Martti Ahtisaari prefers to be called an ‘honest broker’ that makes his stand clear openly. Hiding the incentives and influence might actually be seen as manipulative. (Ahtisaari & Rintakoski 2013: 341–342.) Accusing the mediator of impartiality can also be a tactic of one of the parties. Sometimes the mediator has to take the blame to help the parties continue with negotiations. State mediators cannot always take the risk of losing reputation and the repercussions that might extend to other areas. (Brummer & Piiparinen 2012: 103.) This speaks for the fact that mediation should either be a responsibility for NGO’s or a joint effort with the state mediators.

First of all, mediation initiatives need clear mandates, which means the authority to act as a mediator (Ahtisaari & Rintakoski 2013: 342). Martti Ahtisaari (Ibid. 344–345.) states “it is the negotiators who matter, not the mediators – but in some cases mediators can help.” It is also essential that the negotiators of the warring parties have real power to implement the agreement. This is particularly problematic in internal conflicts with various groups or if a group has no legitimate leader. In such a case, mediating is useless. Mediation is pointless also if the parties have no serious will for a diplomatic solution. For this reason, the mediator needs to test the motives.

Secondly, mediation is most effective as a part of a broader peace process and together with dialogue, confidence- and peacebuilding. Thus, “mediation activities must be strategically designed, well supported, and skillfully implemented.” On a general level, the role of the mediator is to help the parties deal with difficult issues and advance the peace process. Mediators can act as “hosts, observers, facilitators, formulators, educators, manipulators, or advocates depending on the particular peace process.” However, mediator’s primary role is to coordinate the entire process. This starts by conducting an analysis, *feasibility study*, of the situation, the parties, and their motives. That is used in the process design and to create the mediation strategy. The strategy covers the level of engagement, possible leverages, sources of support and where to focus efforts. (Ahtisaari & Rintakoski 2013: 340-341.) The actual issues discussed in peace negotiations include “disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, gender issues, relations with civil society, constitution-building, and power sharing.” However, the parties and the mediator decide on themes and agenda in the end. (Ibid. 347.)

Thirdly, the mediator should aim for sustained peace. The cornerstones of lasting peace are inclusiveness and justice. Mediation needs to focus on preventing the recurrence of the problem behind the conflict but also on building a well-functioning, reliable, and independent legal system. Many peace agreements fail because of inadequate or unjust reconciliation. However, forcing the inclusion of transitional justice mechanisms, such as human rights provisions or investigations of possible war crimes, may result to conflict parties unwillingness to deal with those mediators. (Ibid. 348.) There are also

other judicial and non-judicial procedures that are perhaps easier to negotiate on. These include “truth seeking and truth and reconciliation commissions, institutional reforms, providing reparations to victims, advance community reconciliation, and memorials”. Peace making can also fail if there is no long-term development plan that covers the following peace-building and state-building efforts. (Ahtisaari & Rintakoski 2013: 349.) This is why the cooperation of different organizations that do activities supporting and relating to mediation but not mediation itself are crucial in peace building.

2.2.1. Finnish perspective to mediation

Since the declaration of independence it was necessary for Finland to be associated to western countries. Particularly after the Cold War, one of Finland’s main instruments for soft power has been its image as an active promoter of peace and humanitarian values. (Melissen 2005b: 12.) Mediation is a way of reinforcing Finland’s foreign policy profile, influence in international affairs and bring forward questions on an international level that are a direct national concern. Furthermore, for small states mediation offers the international credibility, political currency also in respect to other contexts, networks and relationships to leading powers, and soft power through demonstrating humanitarian and peaceful values and efforts. (Jaarva et al. 2012: 107)

Given the current political situation with worsening refugee crisis and terror attacks getting closer to Finland there should be no question whether mediating conflicts is relevant to Finland. International conflicts may seem distant but, for example, case Syria proves that we live in a very interdependent world and that the conflicts touch even the people in Finland. If the situation in Syria would have been handled with preventive methods, such as mediation, this situation could have been avoided in total and many lives saved. The Guardian published an article in 2015 claiming that president Martti Ahtisaari came close to a solution in the Syria negotiations back in 2012 but there was not enough political will from the West to end it there. (Borger & Inzaurrealde 2015.)

Finnish mediation is rather recent origin. There were two reasons behind its inclusion in the national agenda around 2008–2009. Firstly, it was seen important that the non-state activities should be supported with systematic policies set by the Finnish state. Secondly, country branding became an issue after the former President Martti Ahtisaari was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. Due to that, the MFA established a Country Brand Delegation. (Joenniemi 2014: 110.) However, Ari Kerkkänen (2012: 123.) argues against mediation as a matter of a country brand as that would loose the main purpose of it and only serve national interests but not the peace itself. Nevertheless, the Country Brand Delegation included mediation in its final report that was published at the end of 2010 (Joenniemi 2014: 110).

In addition, the MFA issued guidelines for peace mediation in May 2010. The aim was to strengthen the role in brokering peace, reinforcing domestic mediation capacities and improving the preparedness to take part in mediation. Later in 2011 the government integrated mediation into its programme for the years 2011–2015. Based on this an Action Plan for Mediation was prepared in December 2011. (Joenniemi 2014: 110–112)

In Finland's mediation profile, the main focus is the development of a normative and institutional basis for mediation in international organisations. Mediation is ultimately based on the UN Charter but according to the MFA the existing other normative framework is very thin. In addition, Finland is implementing and financing projects that support mediation and are committed to the strengthening of the mediation capacity of Finland and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland. (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland of Finland 2016a.)

Finland selects the mediation cases to support according to Finland's thematic and regional priorities, in which Finland has own expertise to offer. These are, for example, human rights, democracy, rule of law issues, election violence, environment issues, regional issues and women, peace and security. (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland 2011: 27.) Furthermore, the APM stresses womens issues as a national focus point.

Women's role in mediation should be increased. (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland 2011: 23–24)

Finland's tools for mediation management

The Action Plan for Mediation (APM) aims to strengthen Finland's role in mediation. The purpose of the action plan was to develop tools to prevent, contain and resolve conflicts in all stages of possible conflict cycles and in cooperation with like-minded countries, organizations and civil society actors. The action plan stressed the importance of networking as a main approach to be applied both in international as well as domestic context. Generally speaking, it includes mediation as a part of a broader and comprehensive package of crisis management. (Joenniemi 2014: 110–112.) Finland's APM is still the current guideline for Finland's peace work and its development. It separates clearly the actions that should be done on an international and national level in order to improve Finland's mediation. (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland 2011: 19, 21.)

According to the APM, high-level coordination of mediation at the MFA brings international visibility and strengthens national cooperation. However, it requires resources at the MFA to be profiled in international mediation. (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland 2011: 18.) This exhibits that the MFA intends to take the coordinative role and improves actions in that area. In addition, this raises the interest to inspect the coordination from the public officials and MFA's perspective.

Ahtisaari Convention is an annual event that provides a platform and brings together various domestic and international conflict mediators and experts to discuss ways of settling ongoing disputes and educate Finnish experts and the public with issues relating to conflict resolution (Joenniemi 2014: 111, 120).

In spring 2014 and in autumn 2015 Finland organised a *Conference on National Dialogue* and Mediation Processes in Helsinki (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland

of Finland 2016a). In recent years national dialogues have become a trend around the world. National dialogues create a participatory and open negotiation process to resolve intra-state conflicts and to build a new democratic system. The dialogues have to be designed and lead by local actors and their model cannot be shifted from one country to another. Peace and the structures it needs cannot be brought but they have to be built on national actors and the international actors role is above all to support the local actors and their processes. Dialogue processes reinforce political ownership and participation and thus guarantee sustainable results. (Rintakoski 2014: 119–120.)

On an international level, Finland has put effort into international development of mediation and improved its own preparedness to operate in mediation activities (Rantanen 2014: 39). In practice, this is done by supporting the nominations of Finns in mediation operations and supportive positions and through an expert exchange between the state administration and civil society mediation actors (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland 2011: 25–26). By cooperating with other countries that are interested in mediation, Finland can increase the effectiveness of its mediation work and share experiences regarding good practices (Ibid. 20). Furthermore, when the interest towards mediation has grown the chances of a single country to be accepted as a mediator has narrowed. This means that by participating in the projects of the international community or by forming alliances especially small countries like Finland still get to influence. (Joenniemi & Lehti 2014: 47.) Evidently, this requires consistency and commitment as well as resources (Kanerva 2012: 113). As a conclusion, these three items are necessary if international development of mediation capacity is truly seen important.

Moreover, Finland has an established commitment to effective multilateralism. UN is in a central role in Finnish foreign policy. For instance, Finland started a joint project together with Turkey, *The Friends of Mediation*, to advance UN's mediation capabilities. The group enhances cooperation between different actors, such as states, international bodies and civil society organisations and promotes preventive action in conflict resolution. Finland is also actively participating in advancing EU's ability in

mediation and playing an active role in EU debates concerning the development of mediation. (Kanerva 2012: 109–111.) Finland is also one of the founding members of the European Peace Institute, established in 2014 (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland of Finland 2016a). In addition, Nordic cooperation is a cornerstone of Finland's mediation programme (Kanerva 2012: 111). Finland initiated a *Nordic network on peace mediation* in 2011. The purpose is to facilitate contacts, identify possible areas of further cooperation and exchange information in an informal and flexible way. (Joenniemi 2014: 118.) Moreover, Finland hopes to improve cooperation with other regional organisations such as the African Union, the OSCE and ASEAN (Kanerva 2012: 111).

The MFA aims to develop its mediation competences with coordination. This enables utilizing the existing resources of the state administration and civil society in mediation-related activities. The coordination, monitoring and planning of mediation is supposed to be anchored as a cross-cutting element in the activities of the MFA. Training of personnel takes place primarily in cooperation with the Crisis Management Centre (CMC) that is in connection with the Ministry of the Interior. (Joenniemi 2014: 118–119.) In addition, the MFA sends Finnish public servants on international mediation training courses and is currently looking into possibilities for more systematic and more extensive mediation training (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland of Finland 2016a). Furthermore, the Minister for Foreign Affairs has *two mediation representatives*, Pekka Haavisto and Lars Backström, and it has appointed a *national Mediation Coordinator* and initiated *the national Coordination Group on Mediation*, which is assembled under the Ministry's leadership. “The Coordination Group gathers actors relevant to mediation from different sectors of society to share information on mediation and peace processes and to explore possible forms of cooperation.” (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland of Finland 2016a.) The group advances a multistakeholder approach to mediation. In addition to these structures, funding is vital to increase the mediation capacity (Joenniemi in Lehti 2014: 119).

National competences should also be advanced in order for Finland to be able to facilitate mediation in various international contexts. However, Finland has rarely acted as a mediator itself, even if it has the experiences, preparedness and competences available. Nevertheless, state administration branches with a significant role in mediation have nominated contact persons for mediation issues. This includes the Prime Minister's Office, Ministries of Finance, Interior, Justice and Defence. The cooperation between government representatives and civil society organizations, such as the Crisis Management Initiative (CMI) and Finn Church Aid (FCA), research institutions and universities, immigrant groups living in Finland and others involved in mediation, primarily takes place at the *national Mediation Coordination Group* meetings. Furthermore, Finland contributes to the improvement and strengthening of various international mediation structures and supports actors and partners engaged in more informal reconciliation and peacemaking activities (track 2). (Joenniemi in Lehti 2014: 119–120.) A holistic view on mediation, systematic capacity building and thorough analysis of specific needs and means are essential for Finnish mediation capacity development (Kerckänen 2012: 114–115).

According to APM, Finland's mediation capacity should be enhanced by utilizing the existing means to solve and prevent conflicts and to achieve sustainable development. In addition, the focus should be on increasing expertise in mediation. In practise this means that the international opportunities and needs for mediation has to be recognized quickly and a Finnish support and knowhow has to be offered. The action plan has a clear agenda how this can be done. It can be done by incorporating mediation as a cross-cutting theme into foreign service, organizing courses of different areas of mediation and systematically utilizing regional knowhow. In addition, mediation knowhow, experience and involvement can be taken into account as a criteria with staff recruitment, training and job rotation. Training courses and info sessions regarding mediation should be organized at the MFA and mediation should also be included in the 'KAVAKU', 'middle management days' and 'ambassador days' program. Also, the action plan emphasizes mediation training, both governmental and non-governmental and suggests that it should be an export item along with mediation related research and

conflict analysis. This training would be offered also to MFA employees, NGO personnel that are directly involved with mediation, policy influencers and crises management personnel. Again, this requires national cooperation between different ministries and various actors, such as the CMC for its knowhow and networks, Fincen, research institutes and universities. (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland 2011: 17–19, 22.)

On a national level, the APM states, that to enhance Finland's mediation capacity, the embassy network should be utilized in recognizing the situations related to mediation and in efficient mapping of the possibilities for action. In addition, Dialogue with the civic organizations should be increased, particularly between the MFA's regional departments and experts from organizations that operate in the field. Furthermore, contacts to Finland's immigrant groups should be fostered in order to utilize their experiences and viewpoint. (Ibid. 18.)

Moreover, Finnish experts should take part in international mediation and its development in a visible and active manner. They should also be implemented into international, regional and non-governmental organizations and the MFA should support that. Additionally, a list of experts that consists of MFA employees who are interested in mediation should be maintained. For all this to be possible sufficient resources should be set to mediation related tasks. (Ibid. 17–19.)

Finland is “militarily non-aligned country, with no imperialist past or direct national interest in most conflict areas”. Finland has strategically positioned itself to the role of traditional, neutral state mediator in a small country niche. However, Finland does not have a clear role in actual mediation of conflicts nor the capacities to implement this strategy. Furthermore, neutral mediators do not have the equivalent insiders understanding and knowledge of the conflict or the leverage to press for a solution. In fact, the conflict parties do not usually determine the acceptability of a mediator based on the impartiality, but whether the mediator is capable of reaching an acceptable

outcome. In this light, Finland should reconsider its role and look into other alternatives such as, “being an aid in shuttle diplomacy, providing support in creating access to parties, functioning as a technical co-mediator, a friend of the process or a thematic technical expert“. Again, a feasible option for a small state, such as Finland, is to utilize the network logic to mediation. (Jaarva et al. 2012: 103–105)

Certain NGO's can be specialized in mediation and to some it comprises only a portion of their operations. However, networking allows even the smaller organizations and individual actors to participate in mediation. Networking is a demonstration of Finland's way and action model to cooperate over the administrative borders and taking into account all areas of the civil society. (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland 2011: 19, 21.) This networking between the different Finnish actors is particularly what this thesis aims to study.

As a conclusion, even if mediation is proven to be useful and beneficial for Finland in many ways, it does not get enough concrete support. For this reason, “it is necessary to raise awareness and highlight the increasing importance of mediation in conflict prevention and resolution”. (Kanerva 2012: 108–109.) The reality is that, on the contrary to previous government programme, the recently drafted government programme is decreasing the funding for development cooperation drastically (Valtioneuvosto 2015a: 16).

2.2.2. Funding for mediation in Finland

Funding is a significant factor in building mediation capacity. Financial resources allow Finland to increase the international visibility and influence also in mediation related questions. The funding for mediation is primarily open development aid (ODA) qualified, from exclusive ODA budget item to be exact. (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland 2011: 33.) The appropriations under the exclusive ODA budget item are divided into nine budget allocation objects (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland 2016b).

In 2016, the development cooperation appropriations are EUR 818 million, which equals 0.38 per cent of Finland's gross national income (GNI). However, Finland is committed to raising the percentage of ODA to 0.7. Out of the total development cooperation appropriations the part, which is administered by the MFA (exclusive ODA budget item), amounts to EUR 493 million. Furthermore, in 2015, conflict prevention and security amounted to 6% of the entire bilateral development assistance of Finland. (Ibid.)

The APM concludes, that the MFA will strive to increase the separate appropriation for mediation that can be used to fund even non ODA qualified operations. This mediation funding was introduced at the MFA in 2010 and the APM states that it is to be continued and increased. (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland 2011: 33.)

However, the current governments adjustment measures will cut the appropriations for development cooperation 200 million euros annually starting in 2016. The cuts are aimed at the exclusive ODA budget item (330 million euros). Then the savings will be directed at loan and capital investments and channelled to the developing countries through companies that are committed to corporate social responsibility (130 million euros). The new government will also stop channelling revenue from emissions trading into development cooperation (around 69 million euros). (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland 2016b.)

After all, the government fiscal plan for 2017–2020 announced that 25 million euro savings are given to development cooperation from 2018. Subsequently, the development cooperation appropriations will amount to 0.39% of GNI. (Ibid.) Still, this is far from the 0,7 % of GNI commitment.

As the peace processes have risky and unpredictable aspects, the situations arise quickly and the peace processes are delicate and confidential, the funding for it has special

features. The APM states that the established procedures of the development cooperation are not applicable as such to mediation situations. For this reason the mediation projects has to have their own handling procedure. (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland 2011: 33.) Yet, the funding for mediation comes from same appropriations as to development cooperation.

The current government programme declares that the government will improve the effectiveness, impact and measurability of development cooperation (Valtioneuvosto 2015a: 33). However, as stated above, mediation cannot be measured with similar indicators and measuring the effectiveness and impact is not as straightforward as in development cooperation. If these three indicators are seen as a prerequisite for funding in the future, this can be seen as a potential threat to Finlands mediation development and to the future allocation of resources to it. The risks of this project mentality are discussed in more detail in the chapter 2.3.2 Funding relationship. Furthermore, also the APM acknowledges the need to improve recording of funds statistics but there the idea is to help estimate the overall funding needs and international comparison in mediation efforts. (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland 2011: 34)

2.2.3. Finnish mediation actors and MFA's key partners

Finland has a long tradition of cooperating and involving the civil society. This is also the foundation of Finnish mediation. (Jaarva et al. 2012: 105–106.) Finland supports regional mediation activities and Finnish and international mediation organisations (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland of Finland 2016a).

In Finland there are three main organizations that are directly involved in mediation. Namely, Finn Church Aid (KUA)⁸, Crises Management Initiative (CMI)⁹, The Finnish

⁸ FCA is the largest Finnish organisation for development cooperation and the second largest provider of humanitarian assistance (Finn Church Aid 2016). It is a faith-based organization. FCA was founded already in 1947 to provide humanitarian aid to war-torn Finland. However, as a peace mediator it is still young. Lately FCA has broadened its peace work activities purposefully as a part of their development cooperation, humanitarian aid and advocacy work. The organization is internationally profiled as an

Evangelical Lutheran Mission (FELM)¹⁰. They all receive funding from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland and they are also the key partners of the MFA. Their conflict prevention and peace work in concrete terms includes many tasks from building trust between conflict parties, supporting local conflict management and mediation capacity and supporting and facilitating official and unofficial dialogue. In addition, they develop action plans for example for tackling the refugee crises. They also build and strengthen local peace networks between individuals and organizations, enhance citizen participation, and educate and train locals of peace work. Furthermore, they might coordinate peace activities, conduct context analysis and peace work clarifications, influence and lobby for peace both internationally and within a country, empower minorities or support their local partners work. (Nissinen & Doty 2014: 236–241.)

There are also various other organizations in Finland that are involved in peace work and directly or indirectly with conflict prevention and mediation. These nongovernmental organizations, such as Wider Security Network WISE, Peace Union of Finland, Committee of 100 in Finland, UNA Finland, *kepa ry*, and *Kehys ry*, all have their valuable contribution in the comprehensive approach to mediation.

2.2.4. Comparison of mediation activities with other countries and possible models for Finland

active peace mediation actor whose speciality is religious and traditional leaders role in peace processes. (Nissinen 2014c: 93–94)

⁹ CMI defines itself as a Private Diplomacy Actor, PDA. PDA is a non-governmental organization that mediates and supports peace processes and maintains dialogue between different actors without their own substantive agenda with the goal of conflict resolution and lasting peace. Peace mediation and dialogue takes place in official and unofficial processes in many levels of the society. CMI operates mainly in so called track 1.5 diplomacy. (Nissinen 2014b: 79–82)

¹⁰ Felm is also a key partner of the MFA. It is one of the oldest Finnish civil society organization and a pioneer in development cooperation. Felm has a partnership-oriented approach to peace work and their development cooperation stresses local ownership and empowerment of communities. This means that Felm operates alongside and through the local partners by strengthening their ability to promote peace and reconciliation but does not do peace mediation themselves. (Laisi & Rintakoski 2014: 107–109, 112, 118)

Nordics have very dissimilar mediation and conflict resolution profiles but their policies do not conflict and even complement each other. Thus there is potential ground for cooperation if the division of labour would work out. (Joenniemi 2014: 148–149.) Furthermore, Joenniemi and Lehti (2014: 46, 48.) argue that the Nordic countries should combine the resources in order to have more opportunities to take on more demanding challenges and to compete with other countries and groupings of countries in the field of peace politics. Furthermore, cooperation with civil society organizations is a clear competitive edge and that Nordic potential should be more utilized also internationally. Moreover, the resources, experiences and contacts of the SCO's should be channelled as a part of the joint Nordic mediation activities and politics.

However, also for example, Switzerland utilizes strategic partnerships with both national and international NGO's that work in the field of mediation (Lanz & Mason: 76). In the UK many government departments are customed to consult with relevant NGO's in their policymaking processes (Barnes 2006: 16). In addition, Germany has a 'civil peace service' (ZFD) that supports local peace workers in conflict situations. This is a joint effort by the government, churches, and development and peace NGO's. The Centre for International Peace Operations (ZIF) trains and recruits peace workers for conflict prevention and peacebuilding. This is another joint initiative of the government and the NGO's. (Barnes 2006:20.) These are just a few examples but they exhibit that there are many ways to include NGO's as strategic partners and that is used by many countries. NGO's can participate actively in policymaking, train government staff, or implement strategies that are consistent with government policies. Thus, government-NGO cooperation is not necessarily the most standout niche as it is so widely practiced already.

Denmark and Sweden handle conflict prevention in a cross-cutting manner. Sweden has the Folke Bernadotte Academy as a separate entity in charge of various activities related to conflict prevention, though it is attached to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Denmark has the whole-of-government approach, which is cross-cutting within the Ministry of

Foreign Affairs but also in the government in general. (Joenniemi 2014: 148–149.) Germany has an inter-Ministerial structure coordinated by the Federal Commissioner for Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding where every relevant ministry is included (Barnes 2006:19).

Switzerland's mediation practice can be characterized as 'active neutrality'. Switzerland is considered as one of the mediation superpowers. There peace promotion is included in federal constitution and it is one of the government's five foreign policy objectives. Furthermore, peacebuilding is institutionalized with the creation of a separate division dealing with human security issues. (Lanz & Mason 2012: 74–75.) Finland does not have this properly institutionalized mediation. In comparison to Norway, their foreign policy emphasizes strongly peace work and assistance, which brings continuance, predictability and reliability for mediation activities. (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland 2011: 20.) Norway has a separate section for mediation and an earmarked budget for it. According to Joenniemi, Finland has also taken steps towards that but the execution is not as profound. (Joenniemi 2014: 148–149.) Germany has also institutionalized the civil society participation by inviting CSO representatives to the Advisory Council on Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding (Barnes 2006:19). This is a more formal and institutionalized version of Finnish CGM, one step further than us.

Also, a huge contrast to Finland is the fact that as a non EU country Switzerland is not obligated to follow the European Union's policy regarding the listing of armed non-state actors as terrorist groups. This means that the representatives of the Swiss government can legally talk to these groups. Furthermore, in comparison to Finland, Swiss government representatives can have direct involvement in mediation. (Lanz & Mason 2012: 74–76.)

Switzerland also organizes training workshops to strengthen the mediation capacities of regional or international organisations (Lanz & Mason 2012: 76). CMI has organized

some trainings but Finland has not really utilized this opportunity more than that even though Finland has a lot of expertise and knowledge in this area.

Switzerland has a separate Center for Peacebuilding located at swisspeace, KOFF, for developing, promoting and exploiting cooperation and synergies between non-governmental and governmental, national and international organizations still keeping the link to official Swiss policies. But what is particularly interesting in relation to Finland is the funding of this center. It gets majority of its funding from the department for foreign affairs but also the 45 member NGO's contribute with a membership fee. (Barnes 2006: 25.) Sure, in Finland some of the NGO's get their funding from member fees but it could be worth investigating this idea where a larger official organizations is funded partially by members and how would the fee be counted. Furthermore, World Bank presented an idea where the interested donor organizations could voluntarily establish a joint platform to coordinate and standardize the frameworks (Ibid. 25). The coordination of donor organizations is also an idea worth investigating. At the moment this is not coordinated in Finland. However, some organizations have more resources and are more capable to promote their cause publicly, which effectively leads to more funding from private people and organizations. Whether this would be necessary to be coordinated or not is another matter.

Germany has a Working Group on Development and Peace, 'Netzwerk Frieden und Entwicklung' ('FriEnt'), for supporting coordination, networking, joint learning, advising, capacity building, and exchange on peacebuilding issues.

"Each of the members seconds one staff member to the FriEnt team, which is guided by a steering committee of all the member organizations, which jointly determines the tasks and projects of the team. FriEnt thus is a unique blend of government and NGO, development institutions and peace organizations." (Barnes 2006:19–20.)

This resembles Finland's CGM but the selection of participants is unique.

The Nordic countries have put substantial effort into mediation and into conflict resolution as a part of their foreign policy. Independently they are active in international mediation related cooperation in many ways and they have several partners but their mutual cooperation is almost non-existent. (Joenniemi & Lehti 2014: 46.) Moreover,

mediation is merely a sidebranch in the current Nordic conversation, which is dominated by the security and defence politics. It seems that, unlike the tradition, the direction of the Nordics profile and interest is nowadays more military based and the traditionally essential peace diplomacy has gotten lesser attention. (Ibid. 48)

2.3. Peace work cooperation

“the new superpower [is] partnership – not just civil society, but the partnership of civil society and small and mid-sized countries coming together to set a new agenda”. (Williams quoted in Barnes 2006: 20)

The need for coordination is recognized on an international level. The field of mediation is getting crowded and that can have a negative impact on the effectiveness of mediation efforts. For this reason, “partnerships and coordination of international, regional and subregional organizations with the United Nations, with each other, and with civil society” are crucially important. In addition, mechanisms to improve sharing of information, cooperation and coordination have to be developed. (Ban 2012: 14.) It has to be pointed out that often when the problems in cooperation and coordination are discussed, it refers to international level and to countries that do not have as good structures for peace work as Finland does. However, there is always room for improvement and this is what the thesis aims to investigate.

Government-CSO cooperation is a “highly complex and fluid system of institutional structures, legal norms, policy and practice arrangements, and resource considerations”. Those are “shaped by a diverse set of actors attempting to drive forward their own interests, perspectives and values utilizing all the tools of influence and / or coercion that are at their disposal”. It is difficult to separate domestic and foreign actors as they are often interlinked and they can all influence each other. (Barnes 2006: 12)

Cooperation works best in countries that have “well-established democracy with a strong rule-of-law” and where the independent civic groups are considered an asset.

Barnes (Ibid. 14.) also argues that, the government – CSO cooperation differs between governments from the North and the South. Northern governments tend to be more open towards participation of civil society organisations. If the cooperation is so context dependent, it talks on behalf of more localized cooperation needs, which CSO's that operate locally can offer. This can also mean that exporting cooperation knowledge might not be possible or a feasible specialization for Finland in the future.

Effective cooperation needs set mechanisms for interaction and working together (Ibid. 24). In order to generate change in the wider system of conflict and war, the grassroots, that is the community level, has to be included. The peace needs to be built “from the bottom-up, the top-down and the middle-out.” However, the practices to do this in a coordinated manner are not well developed. The key is to negotiate dynamic and strategic partnerships between different actors. Barnes calls this ‘institutionalizing the capacity for prevention’. (Barnes 2006: 9)

Governments cooperate with NGO's because they have better and more agile structures for rapid involvement, establishing contacts and networking. This sub-contracting or outsourcing of mediation to NGO's also dodges the rigid hierarchical decision-making of governmental structures. NGO's can perform confidential mediation out of the spotlight. NGO's are more suitable to conduct unofficial mediation in addition to the formal peace negotiations conducted by official actors. (Brummer & Piiparinen 2012: 14.) Furthermore, these partnerships can prevent the systems and networks that sustain war but they need to be coordinated in order to avoid overlapping and competing efforts (Barnes 2006: 9). In addition, many experts have noted that states cannot handle the complexity of the international peacebuilding environment alone and thus need cooperation (Ahtisaari & Rintakoski 2013: 337). Another valid point is that governments may be accused of spying when trying to gather information and conduct analysis whereas CSO's do not have that problem, as they are not considered a threat to national security in the same way (Barnes 2006:18).

There are also limits to the involvement of Track II actors. Sometimes they start a process that is beyond their skills and abilities to complete. They may be too small, too isolated, or lack the capacity to work with each other. The legitimacy of NGO's as actors is sometimes questioned. (Ahtisaari & Rintakoski 2013: 340.) Table 6. offers an illustration of CSO's strengths, weaknesses and challenges in relation to mediation and also exemplifies reasons for cooperation.

Table 6. Summary of CSO Strengths, Weaknesses and Challenges (Barnes 2006: 10).

Summary of CSO Strengths, Weaknesses and Challenges		
Strengths	Limitations/Weaknesses	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Better information on 'reality on the ground' - CSO's can work where government can not (areas) - CSO's can speak to parties government can not reach - CSO's can work on social change issues government often can not - CSO's are better grounded; particularly CBOs enjoy trust and legitimacy - CSO's can inform and monitor policies (the view from below) - CSO's operate more flexibly and adapted to the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Limited organizational capacity, internal governance, funding. - Often a local focus - Weak networking and coordination mechanisms among CSO's - Questionable constituency base and legitimacy of NGO's - Often tense relations with, disregard & mistrust from government - Capacity to act in situations of violent conflict equally hampered - NGO's may weaken the state, by substituting service delivery for too 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sheer diversity of CSO's: different motivations, capacities, contributions - Effectiveness of CSO's peacebuilding initiatives difficult to measure - Tension between having constituency ties (leading partisanship) and impartiality/ neutrality considered crucial for effective civil society peacebuilding - Key conditions for peace are often out of reach for CSO's

context	long	
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The logic of cooperation is evident, and the good will from both sides is also well established. However, to progress from good ideas and good intentions to effective action requires still work and solid commitments. According to Barnes (Barnes 2006: 31), the focus should be on concrete effective action instead of just principles, planning and talk. This requires acknowledging the legitimacy of CSO's in peace matters and they "should be seen as complementing partners with valuable contributions" (Ibid. 9). To facilitate CSO cooperation governments should set up institutional structures and mechanisms such as working groups, entry points and secondments (Ibid 24).

Like any cooperation, CSO's and governments can benefit from developing formal-institutional mechanisms but also building personal relationships enable successful cooperation. Furthermore, it is more likely to have an effective and collaborative working relationship when all parties have mutual understanding, share same goals and there is trust between them. (Barnes 2006: 15.) Inter-governmental and international actors can assist in bringing the CSO's and governments together (Ibid. 18).

CSO's and governments can develop together national and international policy frameworks that are mediated through international institutions (Ibid. 20). As it was mentioned in chapter 2.2.1, Finland's main project in regards to mediation is the development of a normative and institutional basis in international organisations, cooperating with CSO's in this area might be rational and bring added value. Practical examples of possible areas of Government – CSO cooperation are also listed in Table 5. CSO roles at different stages of the conflict cycle.

Inter-CSO cooperation structures that include communication, coordination and mutual assistance also support government CSO cooperation. In Finland the peacebuilding circles are small, which eases the cooperation in general, but there is no official structure for cooperation among CSO's. By working together on specific conflict

situations or on thematic issues it might be possible to create joint initiatives and institutional systems that strengthen cooperation. (Barnes 2006: 24)

2.3.1. Funding relationships

In Finland, funding is the main form of cooperation with most of the peacebuilding NGO's. Furthermore, most of those NGO's receive funding from the Finnish government. This is why that particular relationship is examined more closely in this thesis.

Donor grantee relationship can be anything between enabling partnership and sub-contractor relationship. First is based on trust, interdependence, shared goals, regular and honest dialogue, flexibility in the implementation, and constructive criticism. At the other end, the grantee merely executes the donor's agenda possibly with strict expectations and demands from the donor. There "the implementer could as easily be a for-profit company". Furthermore, another concern with sub-contracting is that the CSO's should not be used to replace government's public services and let alone with the expense of their peacebuilding input. (Barnes 2006: 27–28.)

Funding relationship entails a few problems and paradoxal aspects, which the donors and grantees should be aware of. First of all, the nature of conflicts is spontaneous and rapid but the funding application process is done much in advance due to the requirements of donor funding cycles. This forces the NGO's to plan projects in advance in order to secure funding and then the initiatives might lose the connection to the initial conflict context. Furthermore, these strict project plans might be executed as routine project implementation without checking whether circumstances have changed. Nevertheless, particularly state as a donor, frameworks and procedures are necessary and those are also the fundamentals of planning and monitoring, which are essential in order to develop processes. On the other scale there is the question 'what is fundable?' and on the other 'what is necessary?'. Obviously, there lies a paradox what Barnes calls the risk of 'project mentality'. (Barnes 2006: 26)

Another paradox of funding is when NGO's prioritize their work based on what donors feel is most important, whether donors agree with them or if donors need concrete results to show. The main challenge in institutionalizing the structures and funding relationship is to keep the critical edge and the long-term focus. (Ibid. 28.) However, Finland's low boundaries between the state and the CSO's may lead to losing the critical edge and become more like outsourcing agencies to deliver government services (Ibid. 14). Furthermore, funding long-term projects might take away from the resources and capability to respond to urgent situations that conflicts principally are. Barnes suggests a following solution:

“supporting country-specific, on-the-ground, multi-actor, collaborative, contextualised conflict analysis, and the development of appropriate response strategies in countries where early warnings suggest a risk of near-term violence”. (Ibid. 27)

Particularly relevant challenges to Finland are the movement towards managerialism and key accountability. As discussed in chapter 2.2.2., the government program pressures the improvement of effectiveness, impact and measurability of development cooperation. This can be considered as a managerial approach, where the donor requires “detailed mechanisms for planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting from their grant holders.” Even though there are benefits with this approach, such as professionalism, effectiveness and consistency, they undermine the dynamism. In addition, it is paradoxical that the donors themselves are accountable for the funds. This might ultimately lead the grantee to be more accountable to the donor than to beneficiaries and other participants. One solution to this would be to look into accountability through peer reviews and benchmarking. (Ibid. 28–29)

2.3.2. Diplomatic tracks, multi-track mediation and network model

Today's conflicts are mostly intra-state civil wars (see chapter 1.1.1.), which include parties from all levels of the society. For this reason, successful mediation demands cooperation and networking between diverse parties: governments, international, regional and sub-regional organisations and CSO's. Hence, states increasingly prefer

network model over traditional model for starting and carrying out mediation interventions. Network model is also more flexible and allows rapid and efficient reaction and exchange of information. (Brummer & Piiparinen 2012: 12–13.) Furthermore, mediation actors and researchers are also more strongly agreeing that multi-track mediation is more effective than proceeding with one track only (Nissinen 2014a: 18).

If multi-track approach is not utilized, a peace agreement is merely an understanding between national elites and the decision might not be supported by the civil society. Thus, inclusiveness and support for the peace process from below (bottom-up) results in more legitimate and sustainable peace agreements. (Stichter 2013: 1.) However, Von Burg points out that inclusiveness might complicate the process, extend the duration of talks, increase costs, and thus hinder efficiency. The question is “who and what issues to include as well as how and when to include them?” (Von Burg 2015: 5)

Peace processes can be separated into so called *diplomatic tracks* according to how official and vast they are. In *Track I diplomacy* the official negotiations are conducted between high level leaders and state heads and the goal is to reach a concrete agreement. (Nissinen 2014a: 18.) However, there is no cohesive definition of these terms. What is important is that there is an increasing awareness that mediation efforts should not be limited to track I processes only. *Track II mediation* refers to unofficial diplomacy conducted by mediators among grassroots and midlevel opinion leaders from the religious, tribal and business sectors and civil society. (Brummer & Piiparinen 2012: 14.) Track II diplomacy, is meant to build trust and to prepare for the higher level negotiations. *Track III diplomacy*, takes place in grass root level and it strives to strengthen the interaction and understanding between the people and the communities with unofficial processes. In track 1.5, the participants are influential and often high level politicians but the dialogue is unofficial. (Nissinen 2014a: 18.) By another definition, T2 involves non-official but influential persons (e.g. religious leaders), T3 involves the grassroots level, it means civil society and community-based organizations,

and T1.5 could be either a mix between T1 and T2, or officials participating in their personal capacity (Stichter 2013: 1).

However, often the terminology is limited to the two, official higher level track I diplomacy and unofficial lower level track II diplomacy. Despite the differences with definitions, the processes on the official track I are commonly called *peace negotiations* and on unofficial tracks (T1.5, T2, T3) they are called *dialogues*. (Nissinen 2014a: 18)

Multi-track mediation offers a more holistic and flexible way to handle complexities in contemporary conflicts. However, even if the most effective approach would be to combine the different tracks, there are also problems and risks to it. Multi-track mediation can result in competition, lack of or disagreement about the common solution or goal, avoidance of responsibility and blame, and communication confusion. In addition, planning, monitoring and evaluation can be a challenge. Moreover, someone might deliberately sabotage the entire mediation process. Hence, not to waste resources and lead inefficient operations proper coordination is essential. (Wigell 2012: 18–20; Nissinen & Doty 2014: 201.) Still, predominantly multi-track mediation has more benefits, such as sharing costs and risks, better supply of mediators and services, complementary potential and inclusiveness that supports long-term sustainability (Wigell 2012: 18–20).

Efficient multi-track mediation connects the different tracks in either a simultaneous or sequential manner. There needs to be trust and mutual realization of the complementary role. To facilitate coordinated mediation official mediators need to first identify the relevant unofficial mediators and experts, then build chains of communication and trust between T1 and T2 actors and finally to agree on specific roles of each actor. Identifying can be done by establishing forums for networking and holding regular workshops and meetings. Functional chains of communications can be established by designing and using systems that enable constant communication, sharing information

and updating all actors across the tracks, joint assessment of the situation, coordination of contacts, and by integrating personnel, resources, strategies and operations. In the final stage, the one that takes the leading role has the responsibility for overall coordination. The lead actor is responsible that promises are kept, timetables respected, resource commitments delivered on and that the opponent does the same. In addition, the lead actor should provide a forum for communication across the tracks. Furthermore, all participants should agree on the specific plan to guide operations and on both short-term and long-term commitments of each actor. (Wigell 2012: 20–21)

2.3.3. Finland as a coordinator of mediation

First of all, there is a difference between coordinating mediation networks and coordinating mediation itself. Functional mediation networks support the actual mediation process and enable efficient mediation. As presented earlier, Finland has rarely acted as a mediator. However, Finland has taken forward internationally, for instance at the UN, its comprehensive approach where mediation is seen as a long-term operation mode, which is applicable in all stages of the conflict cycle and at all levels of the society. (Nissinen 2014a: 19.) Cooperation in both domestic and international development cooperation matters with non-state actors, civic groups, individuals, and businesses is customary in Finland (Jaarva et al. 2012: 105–106). But to be clear, this thesis aims to investigate how the cooperation works particularly in mediation related networks within Finland. Still, it is necessary to understand the mediation activities more widely and therefore, this chapter focuses on Finland's mediation and its coordination as a whole and that includes the international level.

Small states with good reputation are not usually perceived as a threat. Yet, they have the official diplomatic resources and networks and they can commit to a long-term process. Based on this, Finland is very well suited for a coordinating role. (Wigell 2012: 20–22.) However, there are contradicting views on small states role as a mediator. For example, Peter T. Coleman (2012: 65–66.) claims that they should not take part in international mediation but to embrace an approach called smart peace. In short, Smart

Peace approach takes advantage of any destabilizing shocks, such as wars, that create optimal conditions for larger scale rearrangement of sociopolitical systems. However, destabilization does not ensure permanent radical change. (Ibid. 68–69.) Furthermore, this shock treatment theory is thoroughly criticized by many, for example, by Naomi Klein in her book ‘The Shock Doctrine’ (2007). It is accused of being exploitive, manipulative and accompanied by misuses of power and violations of human rights.

Despite the contra arguments regarding Finland as a competent mediator (see chapter 2.3 & chapter 2.2.1), there are still feasible options for Finland to participate in mediation and yield the benefits. On an international level, experts suggest that Finland should focus its mediation actions on “hosting Groups of Friends, calling for early action, providing funds rapidly and flexibly, and making experts available”. Additionally, Finland should “promote long-term commitments to mediation processes, supporting the parties beyond the signature of an agreement, while itself setting an example of such a longer-term commitment”. (Jaarva et al. 2012: 105–106.)

Furthermore, utilizing the network model is supported and recommended by many experts as a strategy for Finland. For instance, Wigell, Joenpolvi and Jaarva (2012: 105–106.) suggest, that Finland should foster multi-track and networked mediation and provide an example on “how a state mediator can work within and manage these hybrid structures and networks”. Finland could use the Finnish governments flexible cooperation with domestic and international private diplomacy actors as an example to demonstrate the value of this approach. In regards to the value of it, networking model also reduces the costs of participation into mediation.

According to Brummer and Piiparinen, Finland’s focus should be on building global networks capacities. Finland could develop an approach to international mediation that would be based on networks and then use that logic in the development of mediation policies. Finland should also be progressive in the search for creative and unconventional forms of co-operation. (Brummer & Piiparinen 2012: 125–126.) This, together with Finland’s identity as a Friend of Mediation, should be emphasized. The

true meaning of “friend of ongoing or emerging conflict resolution processes” should be explicated and then that should be turned into action. (Jaarva et al. 2012: 105–106)

On a national level, the combination of using existing channels and actively analysing and gaining knowledge of the conflict should be institutionalised. It should also be implemented into Finnish foreign policy. Based on that comprehensive knowledge, understanding of the conflicts and having a critical approach, Finland could refine various aspects of the mediation strategies. For example, areas such as timing of mediation efforts, the objectives of the process and styles of mediation could be critically inspected and improved. In the end, these can be discussed at relevant international decision-making forums. (Jaarva et al. 2012: 105–106)

Ari Kerkkäinen (2012: 123.) suggests training clusters, research cooperation and establishing a Peace Mediation Secretariat as a model for improving national mediation coordination. He proposes that the training clusters would be supervised by the MFA and led by CMC in partnership with Wider Security Network (WISE, former KATU) and the CMI. Furthermore, the research should be led by the Tampere Peace Research Institute (TAPRI) in partnership with the Finnish Institute for Foreign Affairs (FIIA), CMC, the CMI as well as NGO think tanks like Saferglobe Finland. Finnish Church Aid (FCA) could serve as an advisor in both training and research activities. Moreover, the Peace Mediation Secretariat or Unit should be established by the MFA. That would supervise both training and research activities. The Peace Mediation Secretariat should also be directly in charge of operations and of the peacebuilding budget. It should make an action plan on building national mediation capacity together with all the above-mentioned partners.

3. METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the process that the researcher used in order to understand the phenomenon of interest comprehensively, to form and study the research problem and to design the most suitable research structure accordingly. This chapter explains in detail the sampling frame, the methods used to plan the interview, how the actual research process was conducted, and how the data was analysed. In short, this chapter outlines the research strategy, design and the data analysis method.

This thesis studies the nature of mediation field in Finland and more precisely, the functionality and coordination of the mediation networks. The topic is approached from public official's, particularly the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, perspective. Furthermore, the researcher attempts to find the gaps between the theoretical background, considered best practices and what is the actual situation described by the interviewees. Based on those findings, the thesis attempts to discover the possibilities to improve the coordination and processes of the mediation networks in general.

Main research question is *how to manage mediation networks in Finland?* As the topic is approached from public officials perspective, the thesis also asks how they and Finland in general can benefit from and utilize those networks. This thesis emphasizes the role of public officials and, in that respect, the actions of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland.

3.1. Research methods

This research is done using qualitative methods as data collection strategy, semi-structured in-depth interviews to be exact. The research is done by interviewing various actors from the field of mediation from both governmental and non-governmental organizations. The interviewed sample group represent different positions within the

mediation organizations and they are selected based on their experience and knowledge of cooperation with other actors.

Qualitative methods support the comprehensive investigation of the topic “with careful attention to detail, context, and nuance” (Patton 2002: 227). However, there are differences in the ways to conduct semi-structured interviews. As Patton (2002: 347.) argues, the best result can be achieved by combining different interview strategies. He also claims that they are not mutually exclusive. For that reason, this research combines elements from semi-structured or standardized-open ended interviews to help analysis and to increase credibility but still keeps the conversational freedom of the interview guide approach and theme interviews. Still, the most suitable methods for this research are what Hirsjärvi & Hurme (2008) call *theme interview* and Patton (2002) calls the *general interview guide approach*. According to Hirsjärvi & Hurme, theme interviews is a term that is not used in other languages but for example Patton uses a term ‘the general interview guide approach’ for a similar approach. (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2008: 48). Evidently, they are basically the same method. Thus, both terms are used when referring to theory on research methodology in this chapter but the term theme interview is preferred elsewhere in the thesis and used commonly throughout the thesis.

Theme interview starts from the assumptions that individual’s all experiences, thoughts, beliefs and feelings can be researched with this method. Theme interview has also that advantage in its flexibility. It does not tie the interview into qualitative or quantitative nor it takes a stand on how many interviews there should be or how deep into the topic the interview should go. The most essential aspect in theme interviews is that it relies on themes, not detailed questions, which enables to focus on the respondents opinions. Theme interview acknowledges that the meanings of things given by people are central and those meanings are constructed in interaction. Theme interview is closer to non structured than structured interview. Compared to semi-structured interviews, theme interviews do not need to have exact same wording or even questions to all interviewees. Theme interviews are missing the exact form and order of the questions

that structured interviews have but it is not as free as indepth interview. (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2008: 48)

In general, interview allows interpretation of non-verbal signals or the hidden meanings behind different tonations and stressings. Also interview is a good choice when the area of the research is fairly new or unknown and not that much researched. (Ibid. 34–35.) There is plenty of literature and research on mediation itself but the coordination and cooperation aspect is fairly new as the phenomenon is relatively new internationally and in Finland as a whole.

Interview is beneficial also when the aim is to get indepth information of the phenomena in question. It is possible to ask grounds for opinions and ask other additional questions if necessary. However, the downsides of the interview method are often interviewer related as it takes skills and expertise to conduct a good quality interview. It is also time consuming. (Ibid. 35.) Interview as a method has many problems. Interviews are context and situation dependant. The results are always interpretations and generalizations must be carefully considered. (Ibid. 12.) Besides, the respondents might be keen to give socially acceptable answers, which might damage the reliability of the results. Also, there are no ready models available for analysis, interpretation and reporting so that can be problematic. (Ibid. 35)

In general terms, semi structured interviews contain a set of specific interview questions, which guide the interview and help to focus on a specific research question still allowing the researcher and interviewee to continue the conversation on relevant issues outside the initial questions and thus gain a broader understanding of the topic (Hesse-Biber & Leavy 2011: 102, 128).

Information quality depends of the interviewers skills. Semi-structured interview method minimizes the risk of interpretation errors and increases the validity and reliability of the research. Thus the semi-structured interview model, also called standardized open-ended interviews, is used. Patton's general interview guide approach

is a semi-structured interview model, where the questions are prepared in advance and the question structure is initially pretty much the same for each respondent. This ensures that the same topics are covered in each interview but does not take away the freedom to continue a more specific conversation within a particular subject area if that is seen important. The interview guide also allows to word questions spontaneously to maintain a conversational style but still with the focus on a particular topic. In other words, a guide helps to keep the focus in the interview situation. Furthermore, the interview guide allows to maximize the usefulness of the time spent in the interview situation and makes the interview more systematic and comprehensive by carefully choosing in advance the relevant issues to be surveyed. Although, there is a risk that the researcher has not thought all of the important issues to be discussed. So to say, how well the guide works depends on the interviewers prior knowledge of the important issues. (Patton 2002: 341–344.) Consequently, the respondents need to have relevant experience and the researcher has to acquire an overall understanding of the phenomena in order to determine the significant parts, structures and processes. Based on that initial analysis the researcher formulates the interview structure. The interview is then targeted to the respondents' subjective experiences of situations, which the researcher has already pre analysed. (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2008: 47.)

In this case, the researcher conducted a preliminary interview and attained better understanding of the field through an internship. This was to ensure as accurate, all-covering, explanatory and descriptive questions in advance as possible. After all, the aim of the research is to get a thorough understanding of the realities in Finnish mediation field and to get a comprehensive insight of the phenomenon of interest. Still, this research is context specific and the purpose is not to make empirical generalization from the opinions of the focus group to a larger population or to develop a pervasive theory even if the attempt is to produce suggestions for improvement.

3.2. Sampling

Mediation scene is relatively small and new in Finland and there are only a few civil society actors operating in this field directly. When the focus group is extended to organizations or individuals that do activities that support mediation then the scene is slightly wider as most organizations in development cooperation can be considered to intermediately influence the mediation field. Qualitative in-depth interviews do not require a large sample size and still provide valuable and adequate data of individual's experiences and perspectives. Patton emphasizes "there are no rules for sample size in qualitative inquiry. Sample size depends on what you want to know, the purpose of the inquiry, what can be done with available time and resources". He continues, "the validity, meaningfulness, and insights generated from qualitative inquiry have more to do with the information richness of the cases selected and observational and analytical capabilities of the researcher than with sample size". (Patton 2002: 244–245.) Even if there are only small sample group it does not mean that there would be too little material. If the interviews have lasted for long or you are using same people more than once there is plenty of data. The data collected in theme interviews is mostly rich. (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2008: 135.)

The interviews lasted quite long, in other words, were in depth. In addition, the chosen sample group provided very rich data for analysis. Still, the data collected for this research was not too much or rich but just in good proportion to be manageable by the researcher. Hence, it is safe to assume that sufficient data was collected and that the sample size was adequate. Furthermore, it can be concluded that the chosen data collection method was suitable for the purpose of this research.

The concept of triangulation originates from the idea that every method has its limitations, and multiple methods are usually needed. Triangulation strengthens a study by combining or using several kinds of methods or data. This study uses more than one sampling strategy to find the most suitable respondents. Hence, the sampling represents a methodological mix. (Patton 2002: 247.) It combines elements from intensity,

purposeful and snowball sampling. *Snowball or chain sampling* is a method that uses recommendations of people who have a lot of knowledge on a specific field to locate the most information rich and valuable respondents. Those people are considered to have special importance and their opinions have a lot of weight. (Patton 2002: 237.) This approach is particularly effective to gather the most accurately representable sample group with moderate effort. *Intensity sampling* focuses on information-rich cases that represent the phenomenon sufficiently intense. This strategy does not seek the extreme or unusual cases, as they might not denote the phenomenon of interest accurately. (Ibid. 234.) *Purposeful sampling* technique identifies and selects the most information-rich cases, in other words people that are highly knowledgeable and/or experienced with a phenomenon of interest, so that they offer as valid representation of the topic as possible. Purposeful sampling strategies provide direction for sampling but often depend on some knowledge of the setting being studied. (Ibid. 230–231, 240, 243.) This enables the most effective use of the limited resources of the researcher and in general what is available in this particular marginal field.

The researcher undertook an internship at Wider Security Network (WISE) to get a better insight of the industry and gain access to appropriate connections in regards to the study. Furthermore, the interviewees were selected based on their current or previous involvement in mediation activities, cooperation with different mediation actors and through their insight of the mediation scene in Finland specifically. The interviewees were selected through recommendations of people working in the field and other interviewees. However, they had to meet certain criterion to be homogenous enough for comparison, share a great deal of vision and experience of the mediation industry, but still represent different viewpoints to get a good coverage of the realities in mediation field, governmental and different non-governmental (see Appendix 3. for introduction of the interviewees).

3.3. Question design

In theme interview the questions are designed so that they already form initial categories for the basis of analysing (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2008: 149). Furthermore, the interview questions are designed not to be loaded interview questions to increase validity. The researcher has to be aware of biased or untrue responses. (Patton 2002: 248.) The researcher attempts to design the question so that they cannot be understood in two or more ways and do not contain hidden meanings. The questions are designed to be as neutral as possible. Moreover, there are no simple yes or no questions but many open ended questions to support a more conversational interview. There are also background questions to help compare the respondents to each other and uncover the respondent's own worldview and stance in relation to the topic. According to Patton, in qualitative inquiry, good questions should be open-ended, neutral, singular and clear. (Ibid. 348–353.) However, some questions could be interpreted to contain more than one idea because of two questions but then the different wording aims to elucidate the same thing so that it would be understood the same way by all the respondents. After all, Patton emphasizes that “the wording used in asking questions can make a significant difference in the quality of responses obtained.” (Ibid. 360)

The author applied Hirsjärvi & Hurme (2008: 47, 66.) theory on theme interviews to create the pilot questionnaire frame. The initial interview with Anne Palm, Secretary General at WISE (former KATU), was conducted to get an overview of the focus groups experiences, to test the question design and to clarify the interview process in practise. As a result, the final interview structure was formed. The questions are divided into categories based on the investigative questions, which simplify the analysing part.

3.4. Interview setting

Data was collected between August and October 2015. One preliminary interview, several informal inquiries about the most suitable interviewees and discussions with

people in the industry and finally seven official interviews took place. The interviews were recorder and later transcribed. The duration of the interviews was between 35 minutes to 1 hour 10 minutes. In case it was known in advance that the interview would be within a limited timeframe, the interview questions were sent in advance to the respondent to allow them to prepare.

The invitation for interview was sent via e-mail. Most of the recommended key people replied and took part in the interview. However, there were also two negative responses. Still, the researcher was satisfied with the response rate and with the quality of the respondents. Three of the respondents had plenty and direct involvement in mediation activities, three had average or intermediate involvement but were actively involved in the support activities, and one had fairly little own experience but was still involved with activities that support mediation. To preserve the respondents' anonymity the companies are not referred to by their names in the results.

“Rapport is a stance vis-à-vis the person being interviewed. Neutrality is a stance vis-à-vis the content of what that person says. Rapport has to be established in such a way that it does not undermine the neutrality concerning what the person is telling. Rapport is built on the ability to convey empathy and understanding without judgement.” (Patton 2002: 365–366.)

The interviewer attempted to be at the same time neutral with regard to the content of what is being said to her and also care that the person is willing to share the information with her. The interviews took place at the most convenient and comfortable location for the interviewee, which they got to choose themselves. Most interviews were conducted at the respondents' work place, two at a cafe. They were face to face, one on one interviews. The interviewer specifically tried to refrain from any comments or feedback that could be interpreted opinionated.

Patton stresses the responsibility of the interviewer in maintaining the flow in the conversation and keeping the interviewees reactive with sufficient feedback (Ibid. 375). In the interviews the interviewer asked additional and further questions to maintain the conversation flowing. In addition, some of the questions produced overlapping information, meaning that an answer to one question might have answered one or two

others at the same time. Naturally, those questions were not asked again to avoid repetition, ensure efficient use of time and keep the conversation flowing. Especially because the interviews were conversational, the interviewer paid special attention to not to stray from the topic. At the end of the interview the respondents were always asked if they want to add something to the topic or is there something that should've been asked. In addition, during the interviews some additional questions and comments arose due to the conversational style. All the answers to additional conversation were combined as 'other comments' and later included in the narrative at the analysis phase.

To capture the wording and meaning as accurately as possible, the interviews were recorded, with the consent of the interviewees, and later transcribed. This supports interpretation, organizing, and finding patterns from the data. It also makes it easier to combine the answers of the different respondents. (Patton 2002: 380.) The material was promised to be handled anonymously as far as possible and in case a direct quotation would be necessary, the interviewee would be consulted first. Anonymity helps with the barrier to give straightforward answers to questions that the respondent might find sensitive.

3.5. Data analysis

According to Patton (Ibid. 470–472), qualitative matrix analysis can be used for organizing data, analytical processing, conceptual explaining and clustering purposes, and linking data. The researcher utilizes a qualitative matrix analysis to visualize the connections between the research problem, measurement and investigative questions, theoretical frame of reference, and the findings (see Overlay Matrix, table 4.). This demonstrates the background and purpose of each question and offers a map from research problem to the findings, from beginning to the end.

Patton (2002: 463.) states, that analysis begins by developing classifications or coding schemes. The purpose of that is to discover the most significant core content. The

problem of “*Convergence* – figuring out what things fit together” is easier when theme interview method is applied (Ibid. 465). In theme interview the initial categories work as the basis for coding and grouping data (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2008: 149).

When the data was categorized and grouped accordingly, the next phase was to find recurrent regularities in the data in order to define the significant substance. In this phase it became clear that some questions and categories got lesser value at the interview and did not produce as much valuable data as initially expected but some were clearly the key questions. Some questions were so much linked to each other that they overlapped a bit and produced similar and repeating answers. However, that offered the respondents more opportunities to think about the question and produce richer data. Thus, all questions were necessary and relevant in the end.

The interviews were transcribed so that the answers of each respondent were under the corresponding question. This enables comparative analysis. In addition, this helps the researcher later on to keep track of the certain themes. The researcher used colour coding for each respondent. Once all of the interviews were transcribed, they were combined and analysed question by question. Certain themes and key points were repeated in all interviews. “This is a typical theme interview analysis procedure, where you copy different respondents answers from the same theme (question) one after another”. (Ibid. 141–142).

This thesis uses both inductive and deductive analysis. The research starts with inductive analysis based on theoretical framework and on the preliminary interview. According to Patton (Patton 2002: 454), “inductive analysis involves discovering patterns, themes, and categories in one’s data.” He continues, that qualitative analysis is normally inductive in the beginning but in the final stage deductive analysis is used for confirming, testing and finding the nonconformative cases.

There are many options for organizing and reporting qualitative data. According to Patton (Patton 2002: 453), *content analysis* is commonly used for any effort of

understanding qualitative material with the aim to identify core consistencies and meanings, usually by analyzing text. However, in the *interview guide approach*, also known as the theme interviews (see chapter 3.1), answers from different people can be grouped by topics but the data can be found in different places in each interview. (Ibid. 438–440.)

“There is no single, coherent set of qualitative methods applicable in all analysis of text, talk and interaction. Rather there are a number of methods.” Furthermore, Peräkylä (2004: 283.) explains, that the question of objectivity is important for all these methods. What comes to research, objectivity can be enhanced with concrete actions such as assuring the accuracy and inclusiveness of recordings that the research is based on but also the truthfulness of the analytic claims about those recordings. Working with audio recordings eliminates many of the problems researchers have with accuracy of field notes and with the limited public access to them (Ibid. 285).

4. OBSERVATIONS OF THE INTERVIEWS

This chapter presents the observations from seven interviews. The three non-governmental organizations that took part in the interview are Crises Management Initiative (CMI), Finn Church Aid (FCA) and Wider Security Network (WISE). Four of the respondents represent different units of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland (MFA), each of which have their different perspectives on mediation and different tasks within the MFA relating to it. All of the respondents are involved in peace work and have been involved in mediation in some way, either directly in the mediation negotiations or dialogue, or then in the supporting background functions. These functions include, for instance, funding, developing the norms, policies and practices, raising awareness of mediation by means of communications, or enabling the activities by supporting, initiating and developing cooperation and networks.

The aim is to understand Finnish mediation networks scenario comprehensively. This is why the observations present the general opinions and action models but not too much in detail any specific organizations working models, even though they were asked in the interview. That was only to understand properly the phenomena under study and the backgrounds of the respondents as their individual experience level has an affect on their opinions.

In qualitative process the researcher elucidates meanings and works back and forth between the data and the researchers own perspective to understand the evidence. This means that speculations about significance are merely interpretations and hypothesizing. However, they are still useful. (Patton 2002: 477, 479.) The results were first transcribed and then combined. The categorization follows the initial interview structure, the measurement questions, and the narrative is built on that as well. The narrative is entirely comprised of the opinions and experiences gathered at the interviews. Still, the researchers meaning construction and observations influence the

narrative, thus it is an interpretation. Quotations of the interviews are used when necessary to exemplify the exact original meaning.

4.1. Cooperation between Finnish mediation actors

In Finland the peace mediation circles are relatively small and mostly the actors who work in the field are already known to each other. Therefore, the cooperation between the officials and the NGO's is close in Finland. Furthermore, the MFA does not do mediation by itself so it uses national and international NGO's to implement the projects that they identify. In other words, the MFA gets support in fieldwork. There are three Finnish organizations leading the implementation of peace work projects, namely CMI, FCA and FELM. Based on the experiences of the interviewees, the main benefits of cooperation can be listed as follows: complementarity of each other's operations, staying on track of others operations to avoid doing the same, and to receive information.

Every Non-Governmental Organization operating in the field of peace work in Finland receives funding from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, either from the political department or from regional department's development cooperation funds. The MFA meets regularly with the NGO's that they grant funds to, which is virtually every NGO in Finland. The MFA has separate meetings with the most important mediation actors, the three above mentioned key partners. Also other international organizations get a share of the MFA's development funds. In the end, the money comes from taxpayers. Few organizations receive funding also from other countries, the EU, different trusts or corporations, or from private donators. Neither, the MFA or the Finnish NGO respondents see that there would be a conflict of interest with the government funding. Finland has a long history of supporting NGO's and the cooperation is based on openness, trust and impartiality. Furthermore, "Finland does not have a strategic interest in mediation". That might effectively lead to biases.

The cooperation between MFA and NGO's is said to be good because of strong mutual trust and openness. Yet, "the MFA hopes that their key partners would brief them even more but the NGO's find it hard to manage from the hurries or then there is no Finnish embassy to brief in that particular place". NGO's also receive assistance occasionally in the form of expertise regarding the supportive functions, such as human resources or communications. In addition, NGO's get support and information from each other. The MFA tries to encourage Finnish peace work actors to work together. For example, the MFA invited the three biggest Finnish peace work actors into the National Dialogue Conference consortium so that they would cooperatively organize the conference instead of carrying it out by themselves. Track 1, 1,5 and 2 actors run into each other in various seminars, trainings or latest at the National Coordination Group on Mediation. Yet, there are no thematic based general meetings in the mediation field. Moreover, Finnish NGO's do not cooperate much in field projects with other Finnish organizations, except for discourse, lobbying, information sharing and seminars, because they operate in different mediation cases.

Furthermore, in Finland "there is no lack of trust when everyone is so honest to begin with". The circles are small and the different actors have known each other already for long so almost all the actors in this industry are known to each other. Building trust with cooperation partners is based on long-term cooperation, honesty about what you can do and what not, and on results and expertise. "There is no quick solution to build trust".

Mediation activities are planned very arbitrary. They originate from the MFA's own interest and it is not anyhow systematic. The MFA hears about the need for mediation through contacts. "Some ambassador might be active and that is the start of the whole process. There is no strategic interest and Finland does not have a consistent strategy for mediation". On the contrary, many bigger countries make mediation related decisions strategically, for example, based on oil or other commodities. Finland is only striving for good deeds but still very randomly. Although, Finland, or more specifically the MFA, tries to strategically develop and take forward the UN agenda.

The NGO's have their own plans and process design of what they want to do. However, they claim to inform the official party if they are working on an unofficial process alongside the official process. For example, CMI states that it is their goal always to influence the official actors and process if there is such. They also inform the other actors constantly. Furthermore, CMI has a policy that the process must not be overlapping with another actor and it must not cause harm to another actor or to the peace process itself.

Most respondents do not see any bigger problems in cooperation. On a national level competition can be somehow controlled by choosing the projects to be funded. MFA chooses the funded subjects and projects so that they are not overlapping. Though, "this is not a bulletproof system". Moreover, "these ongoing big budget cuts might bring some problems for NGO's and to cooperation but it is too soon to say how this will turn out". The respondents tell that there is already competition in order to get funding for their own operations.

Sometimes competition brings overlaps. The MFA consults with the embassies if there is an upcoming field operation and is there genuinely demand for such a project in the field, is it something what a Finnish actor could commence and who else is operating there. "It is nobody's benefit to get involved just to be busy but everyone's benefit to be genuinely effective." Still, competition in general can sometimes result in withholding information and competition over budget even in Finland.

There is competition particularly in projects that are in the media. Every NGO wants visibility to get as much good will as possible. As an example:

"after the tsunami, the villages, which accommodated the media, got significantly more reconstruction funding. Same goes for mediation. Certain conflicts everyone rushes into and sends their special representatives and others might get completely forgotten."

NGO's need visibility in order to get financing for their operations. In a sense this is paradoxal because the most sensible thing would be for everyone to operate in different

places because you are most effective and influential where you get the biggest comparative advantage and room to operate. In addition, “seeking publicity does not exactly help in building trust”. Still, “this is the unpleasant reality and even Finland has been in situations where it feels like there is a lot of help available”. However, it must be said, that the biggest mediation actors do a lot of work which is not visible anywhere. In conflict mediation, a lot happens what cannot be reported or communicated publically because everything needs to be very confidential and the mediator has to gain the trust of the parties before they can even start the negotiations.

“The competition is only natural between NGO’s but the cooperation still works fine.” On a general level, the respondents agree, that the cooperation is good in Finland between the different actors. Information is shared but the cooperation could still be improved. “Everything comes down to openness and transparency”.

4.1.1. Contacts and networks

Networks are crucial in peace work. “In a broad perspective everything is based on those. It would be impossible to operate locally without the right local network”. Even public officials cannot operate only relying on official authorities but it is important to have a solid interaction with national and international experts and NGO’s. In Finland, mainly MFA maintains, coordinates and is responsible of the Finnish mediation networks but they also try to authorize NGO’s to work together.

The study shows, that communication in peace work happens mainly at a personal level, face-to-face. In that sense, the new means of communication such as social media does not come into question when creating contacts. New contacts are created for instance at seminars and events. It is a small circle of people so quite soon one can know all the central actors and key figures, and hear about the new important organizations. On an international level, the MFA seeks and creates new partners in the field, through their representative offices, it is, embassies. Then again, many of NGO’s cooperation

partners come through contacts. Sometimes they are sought after but seldom. Mostly there is a long history of cooperation and then a will to continue that cooperation.

The interviews reveal, that on a general level there is no official contact database of the Finnish people who operate in the field of peace work. Hence, no one is in charge of such roster either. Few interviewees from both MFA and NGO background feel that an official entity, the MFA or CMC, should compile a directory. However, not all agree, “for resource based reasons CMI or a university would be better suited for leading such a project and take that as their responsibility, not the MFA”. A roster is essential for coordination and “would be useful for example when UN needs to find an expert of particular field”. In addition, “the UN and EU peace mediation contacts would be useful to be at hand”. There have been some efforts to build a directory and some partial ones exist. Still, there is not a proper one of the mediation and peace work actors and experts in Finland. There is also the concern that “in case a roster would be created it needs to be maintained by someone because otherwise it is not reliable information if anyone can add information to it”.

MFA's political section (POL 50) maintains the MFA's contacts and the entire mediation themes. Still, the MFA does not have a proper directory, not even in the making. However, a list of organizations that do mediation or work in that field exists. The list also contains information of what kind of projects they have. The MFA's embassy network maintains the field contacts. The Nordic Network is planning to gather a list of female peace mediators. There was an argument,

“MFA sees the benefits of the roster but they are not willing to compile one. However, they would want some other party to possibly create one. Here the problem is that NGO's do not have access to the official registers like the MFA has to CMC's roster for instance. Though, even CMC does not necessarily give away their information”.

The contacts are not consistently upheld even within organizations. At NGO's, the employees have their own contacts. This emphasizes the important role of the lead figures. One respondent questioned whether there could even be an actual list of contacts due to the fact that contacts are private and depend on the personal chemistry between

the two people. Clearly, there is a threat of losing an important contact when an employee leaves.

“Some of the contacts will be lost if a person chooses to leave but those contacts are very personal and the added value and expertise of that particular person and what he or she brings to the company. Sure it is possible to try to build an up to date roster but it will never fully succeed.”

It could be that contacts cannot be shared but transfer with the person. Still, the respondents say that there could be a contact database and apparently there have been also NGO efforts to build one too. However, there was critical discussion, that a roster cannot include all contacts but only the common ones such as fund raising related, so only on a general level.

The contacts might be better coordinated locally or within a certain area. In certain processes the responsibility of particular contacts is internally allocated so that someone is primarily responsible of it.

“Every now and then some coordination problems occur but a certain group handles a particular area so they can coordinate better amongst themselves. Still, in a particular context the ownership of the contact belongs to the supervisor and to the team.”

4.1.2. Mediation workshops, forums and networks and their coordination between different tracks

Initially, most of the respondents state that there is very little overlapping amongst Finnish peace work actors. The roles of the Finnish organizations are quite different from each other. Thus, they feel that, there is no need for coordination on a national level. At the same time, the question of need for coordination produces conflicting answers and opinions. Apparently, if there would be more actors in Finland then coordination would be a good idea. Furthermore, most of the interviewees think that there is not one actor that could rule over others and that everything should be decided jointly. On the other hand, many complain about the dysfunctional information flow, scarce information, inadequate contact details, occasional overlapping projects and competition over meagre and diminishing funds. This leads to the conclusion that

coordination is in fact already necessary between Finnish actors and should be developed, at the latest if there is a desire to increase mediation efforts in the future. At the moment the national Coordination Group on Mediation (CGM), National Dialogue Conference and 1325 monitoring group (women perspective, managed by the Minister of the Interior) are the only proper, public and a bit more official attempts of coordinated action between the different tracks and actors in the field of mediation. There is hardly any other “official” coordination except for the occasional seminars.

CGM is MFA’s unofficial body and it was founded only about 3–4 years ago. All of the respondents are members of the CGM. They meet a couple of times a year and most of the respondents consider that to be adequate. The main purpose of the group has been information sharing, not so much the actual coordination, even though the name suggests that. The POL 50 unit at the MFA organizes the National Coordination Group on Mediation. They plan the agenda, decide what are the current topics at Finnish national level and are primarily in charge of the coordination and ground work. Current topic in this context means what is relevant to Finland’s foreign political agenda at the moment. For example, “if there is need for a particular report or if there is an event coming up and the POL 50 needs to think how to develop that. The purpose is not to cover every crisis at hand”. Hence, the CGM is used for communicating what the Foreign Service and MFA thinks to be important. “Above all the CGM is all about exchanging timely and relevant information but not to take on any bigger themes. Although, nothing prevents the participants from bringing up topics.” However, majority of the respondent’s hope that the core purpose of the CGM would be clearer and more specific.

The successfulness of the CGM is not reported to anywhere nor is it measured, for instance with a feedback survey to the participants. At the MFA there is a constant job rotation every three to four years. Hence, the responsibility of steering the CGM is a position that circulates internally in the MFA as well. This is a potential problem as the valuable information gained from the meetings might not be effectively utilized within the MFA and some information might be lost during the change of post. The person in

charge of the CGM at the moment does not see any need for CGM evaluation, further development of the concept or working models nor to make it a more official entity.

The CGM is criticised for having a lot of different kinds of organizations that are not actually directly dealing with mediation. But obviously the MFA cannot deny participation of some organizations. The respondents suggest as a solution to organize smaller sub groups or thematic meetings. All of the NGO representatives agree, that CGM is a good initiative but it needs a better focus from the MFA, for example, regularity and presenting the ongoing projects such as what is going on at the UN. Once again, this seems to be a question of openness and transparency.

In addition to that, the National Dialogue Conference is the biggest mediation event of the year in Finland. It is an annual event that takes place in Finland every second year. The main organizer of the event is MFA and the three biggest peace organizations in Finland are in charge of the planning but with the lead of the special representative of the mediation of Finland and the UN section of the MFA.

The MFA also meets privately with its key partners in so called steering groups. This type of coordination is considered to be necessary between the NGO's and MFA. The meetings are held few times a year. All of the cooperation is revised then. If an NGO gets their MFA funding from the development funds they meet with the GEO 30 unit (civil society unit). This leads to a question, how smooth is the cooperation between POL 50 and GEO 30 then? Is there a possibility that it could cause some problems with the project funding or with rapid response to unexpected situations or to the relationship with MFA's partners? Furthermore, the MFA's Regional Unit has many individual projects themselves.

In Finland no organization survives without the government funding. All organizations that operate in the international politics sector, mediation to be exact, get their main funding from the MFA, either from the development funds or political side. Hence,

already when creating the action plan and applying funding, the organizations get feedback from the MFA, if there is any overlapping. Thus, the MFA coordinates at the point when they receive the funding application and notice if someone is already doing the same. However, no one forbids an organization to act on their own if they get the funding from elsewhere and they have good enough contacts of their own in that certain place. But the organizations could agree and coordinate more on things amongst themselves than they currently do. In a way the coordination works but the CGM still isn't an official body.

4.1.3. Communication

In Finland there is a cooperative and open tradition between official parties and NGO's. The MFA wants openness and collaboration with the NGO's. The collective information will increase only through that. For this reason, NGO representatives are included in MFA's Finnish delegations.

Communication is case dependant as each project is unique and has a different party in charge of the operations. Some have daily contact and some more rarely. There is no official mean of communication with the cooperation partners. Cooperation is done via all traditional means of communication such as meetings and email lists. The MFA's emails cover, for instance, what goes on at the United Nations. Those emails also get forwarded to relevant actors. In addition, Ministers speeches at events are used as a mean of influencing. For example, arms trade treaty was strongly brought forward in civil happenings. MFA's embassy network handles the communication and discussions locally.

The respondents agree, that personal contacts and face-to-face conversations are always the best way to influence and network. Particularly in mediation it is absolutely necessary. Basically, the richer the communications tool, the better. For instance, CMI does not even do influencing in other ways, such as, through media or advising policy and decision makers via letters or emails. Evidently this tells, that new means of

communication such as social media tools are not really utilized in the actual mediation work or its coordination, except for events or publications.

MFA's CGM is the main instrument for communication and the connection between different tracks in Finland. Unless the different actors keep in contact among themselves. Thus, CGM is at the moment the best way to network.

“Well, it might not be the best way but it is the only way. It is good because it brings all the actors at least once or twice a year at the same table. There are a lot of actors that do not otherwise work with each other.”

CGM is convened via Email and also the communication happens through that. The public officials summon different assemblies where the participants are selected based on the MFA's knowledge of them.

“We trust that we know all the actors, latest when they apply for funding from the MFA we get to know of them. If someone doesn't get an invitation to a meeting that would be important to him or her, they will be actively in contact themselves. A few unofficial advisory boards have been formed but mainly all who are relevant are a part of it.”

4.1.4. Use of social media

Digital tools and social media are useful but everything cannot be shared in the field of mediation. Use of social media in mediation work or in influencing depends on what can be told in real time and who to take into those conversations. Many projects are classified and thus what goes on or who is participating in the negotiations cannot be shared. Because of safety reasons and particularly safety of the participants, it is not possible to tell about an ongoing situation. Of course afterwards the successfulness and what not to do can be assessed. That kind of post situation lessons learned type of reporting could be shared to public but not a current stream or a real-time webpage, unless it is not a public webpage. “Those who should be aware of the process mostly are informed.” In addition, real mediation and peace process comes down to personal relations, chemistry and intuition, so it is essential to be physically present. To sum up the interviewees opinion, nothing can replace personal contact and conversation.

Especially the first meeting has to be face-to-face. After that it is possible to make use of other means such as skype.

The respondents use for example twitter and facebook for information sharing and gathering but there is only very 'upper level' information and nothing that detailed about mediation. Important international politicians or significant figures twitter accounts and different NGO's facebook pages are followed and used for information gathering. "Sometimes you get the information quicker from twitter than it comes through internally." Still, most respondents follow social media only on a personal level, as much as they can though, but it is not anyhow systematic. Not even the communications departments at the MFA use social media to follow and compile information to their announcements. "That would be lovely but there is not enough resources for that." As a conclusion, there is no centralized information channel relating mediation and that information is not easily available. Still, social media or other modern information technology tools are very little utilized.

4.1.5. Information sharing and gathering

The interviewees agreed that, information about a mediation process can be shared publicly only after the mediation because of the sensitivity of the process. Hence, the sensitivity is a challenge for information flow. It can even be harmful to the entire peace process and dangerous to the people participating in it if sensitive information will end up in wrong hands or go public before the process is settled or seen through. At the moment, information is shared publicly via web pages, publications and newsletters. In official mediation, big part of the information sharing takes place also at personal face-to-face meetings between public officials. There isn't a one particular place where information would be shared collectively to public or to other mediation actors. When, information is not organized but scattered, it needs to be collected from various sources, such as networks or international organizations mailing lists. It takes own initiative from the NGO's to get that information. However, same people are circulating at different tasks so they know through that where to search for information and who to share it

with. As a conclusion, no one is in charge or responsible for information sharing between different actors and there is no place to get or put the information collectively so everyone needs to use their own time to gather it.

On an international level, the UN has UN peacemaker, that collects info of UN peace activities that are public information. In addition, the EU has networks between track 1 and track 2, where Finnish NGO's and public officials are members and attend the meetings.

On a national level, National Coordination Group on Mediation (CGM) is the place in Finland, or actually a meeting, where information is shared between different non-governmental organizations (NGO's), public officials and other actors. It includes both official and unofficial actors, so called tracks 1, 1,5 and 2. However, even there the information sharing is not systematic. It is based on free information exchange so the participants tell what they please. National Dialogue Conference is another bigger input from the government, which entails very tight cooperation and networking. The MFA is very liberal regarding who to invite to that.

Furthermore, the information is shared within organizations. For example, "the successfulness of the mediation process is reported constantly internally at the MFA". However, the effects of the actions or the successfulness of the mediation operation in general is difficult to prove as the indicators are not as unambiguous as in development work. Therefore, it is more challenging to determine those and share that information.

The MFA receives reports of conflict areas from the UN, the OSCE, and from the EU, as well as from their own representative office network, that is the embassies. Their information comes mainly through official routes. In addition, the MFA has dialogue with those organizations that they are funding. Furthermore, they meet with representatives from various countries, including the less organized groups, who want to bring their case forward and hope that Finland will move it forward for example at the UN. Information can also be gathered according to the situation and need, for example,

issues relating to the position of women is relevant to the MFA, as it is in the political agenda of Finland. In addition, they follow think tank conversation and base their decisions on researches.

At the NGO's the mediation information is gathered according to their level of involvement in the actual field operations. The more involvement, the more channels and means are used for compiling the data. Some NGO's have local experts in their payroll and they use various networks. Sometimes information is gathered from the news or from other networks, such as international organizations e-mail lists and through networks such as EPLO in Brussels. It was noted, "it is not wise to rely on one information source". Some NGO's also do a bit of social media monitoring but not of a specific channel or anyhow systematically. It depends completely on the conflict. In case the NGO is not directly involved in mediation, their information sources are fairly scarce and not systematic at all. "It would be a good idea to have a forum where information would be gathered collectively". However, "there are no resources for analysing the compiled information". NGO's also share information forward with their own consideration and judgement but is it reliable or relevant always is another matter.

4.1.6. Evaluation and analysis of cooperation and partners

The MFA's partner evaluation and funding model is such that they estimate the organizations functions on development policy grounds. However, it was many times pointed out that this is a challenge because in mediation the indicators are not as clear as in development cooperation. Hence, it should not be evaluated with same indicators. Yet, "so far there has not been a situation where the partner selection has gone wrong or the partner has not been suitable for the project".

Evaluation happens case by case but the three key partners receive general support. Furthermore, the organizations should have projects that fit the MFA's portfolio and the project should be within the budget frame. For example, women and peace type of

themes get funding. Moreover, the MFA evaluates is the NGO an established actor and do they have expertise in the particular field, as the right kind of expertise is sparse. In addition, who really has the staff that the project requires. The vast majority of the Finnish NGO's are so small that they have people just for their own activities.

In more detail, the MFA's evaluation report includes details such as, has there been an actual impact on calming down the situation, did the process result in commitments, was a contract signed, are the right people included in the process, has the message truly been received, is the access to right forums achieved and have they managed to go and talk at those even about the difficult and delicate issues. In addition, do those people really have the authority and do people truly obey these leaders.

Then again, the NGO's have various ways to evaluate and decide on their cooperation partners. For example, at CMI, many of the cooperation partners come through contacts. Sometimes they are sought after but seldom. Mostly there is a long history of cooperation and then a will to continue that cooperation. They try to think that what would be the desired role for a partner and their usefulness. More specifically, what is their capacity and expertise, the trust they enjoy and how are they seen at the local level, neutral or not. CMI does not have exactly an official analysis for partners except what comes to financing; like evaluating the financial management capacity.

Regarding Finland's main coordinative body CGM, there is no participant evaluation for who is accepted to it. For example, it does not matter in what region the organization operates. Furthermore, it is not a clear procedure that who gets invited to CGM and on what grounds. But what is clear is that the participants do not need to be mediators or represent an organization that does actual mediation. They can be for instance research institutes or universities.

4.1.7. Rules for mediation

Rules related to cooperation and division of work in mediation field is terribly hard to do. However, in Finland the different roles and emphasises are already automatically formed. Some operate more in training than facilitation, some with religious viewpoint. The interviews could be summed up that everyone wants coordination but in reality nobody wants to be coordinated. The NGO's want to keep their independence and not be subjectified to common processes. In addition, outside supervision most likely does not work unless the rules are more like good practices. The respondents' common opinion is, that coordination should preferably be voluntary based. "Coordination should be voluntary and the benefit of cooperation should be seen greater than each one trying to maximize their own benefit". There should not be general binding rules but self controlling and monitoring. NGO's should do it together in cooperation, more like information sharing. At the national level the NGO's coordination is still so much easier than on international level.

"It is a different matter if we talk about development cooperation type of activity in a fragile state, which seeks to prevent the emergence of a conflict or handle the situation after the mediation process (post mediation/conflict). Rules for that might be possible".

However, if there would be common Finnish mediation rules, then they should include few of the following essential points: "responsibility to protect, must respect and include all the parties, and compulsory to have thorough knowledge of the situation". "Help has to be effective and lead to results. Although, mediation projects are ad hoc by nature so it is not easy". In addition, "if there would be rules, it should be MFA's job to set them because it would need to be an official party for the political weight and credibility". Few of the interviewees felt strongly that there should not be own rules for Finland but instead we should utilize the existing international ones and think good practices based on those. For instance, the UN's mediation guidance could be discussed with the Finnish actors and what could be utilized of it. One respondent stated "EUs development cooperation would work for conflict prevention and that the international human rights treaties are binding to Finland".

On an international level, the MFA has done this normative development for instance at the United Nation, rules for mediation particularly. That has resulted in publishing the first mediation guidelines a few years ago from Finnish and Turkish initiative, also

known as friends of mediation group. It includes the basic norms, such as the acceptance of the parties. Finland has a stance that the international human rights conventions apply and that the recommendations from international Criminal court and the principles of impunity are binding as well.

EU has strived to do a division of tasks in regards to development cooperation. On the other hand, “Finland is such a small country and there are so many conflicts around the world, so how can those be shared”.

“Sure, if it would be possible, it certainly would be an advantage. For example, those wrestling with the Constitutional law matters could discuss with each other. Also it would be useful to have a discussion on the implementation of the peace agreement, but we do not necessarily have such a big scene or that many actors in the field.”

As a part of the EU's Effectiveness agenda, they have tried to set it so that you would always need to establish some donor group in which the actions are coordinated and must be agreed on separately. They would also need to use certain models to gather the money together. The point is to work with one larger project rather than in many small ones. EU term for this is ‘aid effectiveness’. These donor groups are used for example, in Mozambique in EU development projects. Also, all of the Tanzania donors form a donor group, and there is only one in charge of a particular expertise area such as training an expert group, rural development or environmental issues. In other words, the useful aspects of these donor groups are better coordination, joint or even democratic decision making, larger projects and there would be a strong emphasis on the financial side, so the funding would be guaranteed.

However, this donor group model in mediation would be difficult because mediation is so different to development cooperation. The projects come suddenly, the conflicts are so dissimilar from each other, personal contacts are fundamental for effective operations, and the operations are very confidential. Even so, the donor group model could be worth investigating more.

To continue about the funding, that “if there is only one party that funds, like in the MFA’s case, then supervision and control of the funding would be a good idea to add to

the rules. Although, this is more important for the receiving end”. Still, this point is essential. Funding would be a key element to be included in the rules as it enables or disables possible projects. “It is possible to control with money, that who gets it”.

4.1.8. Roles in mediation at a national level

Should there be only one entity in charge of the mediation processes? This subject divides the respondents. Some feel that one organization in the lead would be beneficial, some see pros and cons in both sides and others think that there is no need for such because the leading part falls on someone based on organic selection as there are only a few actors in Finland who do actual mediation. “Everyone does according to their own expertise areas, which are different from others”. In fact, there is only one organization in Finland, the CMI, that is focused purely on mediation. One felt strongly that the government cannot command but things need to be decided on jointly in general meetings. Even so, the competition within this field might prevent the mutual decision-making.

If only one would be in charge then it should be an official entity. Thus, the MFA would be the most natural actor to be in the lead position on a national level. It was revealed that there has been concept development and efforts to that direction. “It would be more safer and flexible way for all to have only one in charge. However, that can lead to organization jealousies and those can prevent it from happening”. Also for that reason, it would need to be an official body.

“This is clearly a function for the MFA more than for the other ministries or parties. The organizations work according to their own ideology and do not want to loose their autonomy. Even if the MFA would be the most natural one for the job, nowadays everyone is avoiding binding goals at the MFA. It is also a question of resources.”

Another possibility would be to combine existing resources and actors into one mediation capacity development network or as an own unit dedicated for mediation. Within the MFA, “the centralization of activities would ease for example resources, if the MFA had more staff”. However, the people at the regional departments who carry out projects related to mediation are responsible of much more than just that. Hence,

they cannot be removed to other projects. They have to take care of the entire bilateral relations between the countries. At the same time the political sections mediation team does not have as much regional expertise to use it as a basis for starting a new project. Hence, they need the knowledge of the area from regional departments so that they dare to take part in some regional peace project. But in principle it could be possible to found a larger mediation unit in Finland. Switzerland and Norway and other countries where this type of unit exists, have separate executive country or regional departments and only the larger projects are dealt in these. So the question is how much of merging would it be. POL 50 is not equivalent to Norway's own separate unit dedicated to mediation. "It would be good to have such but this is a matter of resources. Even government has its restrictions".

In a broader perspective, it would be complicated to merge the national NGO's because each organization has different set of core values, for example Christian or others. In that respect, "FCA and FELM might be able to join forces". Though, this is a question of how much the values of the mediator play a role in actual mediation and in everyday activities. However, few respondents agreed that a separate peace mediation institute, which takes care of the coordination, training and communications, could be founded. That is, if there would be resources for it. However, more active participation of the government would make the operations more difficult or even prevent them completely. For this reason, independent unofficial actors are needed because everyone has their own differentiating roles that support each other. Unofficial actors need to exist alongside the governmental ones, because government cannot operate alone or in the same way as they can. The MFA has to cooperate with track 2 actors, as the implementation has to come elsewhere. At the moment, they provide funding, facilitation, assistance to local actors, and support the collaboration of Finnish actors.

The MFA already aims to control with funding. What they fund they also follow the results. But the MFA does not attempt to influence the operations. "It is not modern world to issue rules on what you can or cannot do". However, there are many actors who get funding also from elsewhere in addition to MFA. Controlling their activities is

not possible without a set of common rules. This is why mediation should be in government programs in a central role and in the foreign policy program. In Finland mediation is strongly linked with OSCE and UN cooperation at the moment.

“If Finland wants to be a strong actor in the mediation sector the conditions for it should be created. An action plan should be created at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland and funding. Then the organizations would be left with the practical implementation. The participants for different consortiums would get compiled from different organizations.”

Another solution is to have specific roles so that there would not be any overlapping, in a similar way that in the humanitarian section so that the roles would be agreed on based on each organizations expertise area. Agreeing on roles has to do with the will of the parties and their different strengths and expertise areas. “On a national level the MFA evaluates the NGO’s strengths but ‘who does and what’ is not agreed on anyhow more officially than that because the world is such a big place that each organization can direct their actions to a specific region”.

4.1.9. Development suggestions for cooperation and coordination

According to the respondents, everything works really well in Finland in comparison to the rest of the world. The cooperation works extremely well between official authorities and NGO’s. Still, there is always room for improvement. Everyone feels that their own agenda and what they do is most important. They don’t want anyone to come and say what they can or cannot do, meaning that no one wants to be coordinated. In a sense, everyone agrees that it would be good to have more coordination but in reality, they do not want to give the power to someone else, especially the biggest and most renowned (international) organizations. In particular those organizations that collect money from the people with different campaigns need to be visible and seen in the public. They need the publicity to get donors. That is also why it is not beneficial to have the operations coordinated or restrained in any way.

“In humanitarian side this works probably the best, for instance in the UN there are different clusters, such as health or water relating, and they agree with each other on their roles and who does and what. On other sectors the coordination does not really work. The UN can do it somehow but there are so many levels, like at the high-level the secretary general acts as a mediator but at the grass-root level there are just too many (actors)”.

The key question is that is mediation considered politically significant. Is it something that Finland could be a major actor in? If so, then it would need to begin from the top. It should be discussed in all of the important speeches, included in government programs and it should go through the entire field. For that to happen, a Ministry is needed so that there is someone who writes and forms the speeches. In order for that chain to work, it needs enlightened and well-informed politicians. Then the organizations should be the ones with control function so that they criticize the politicians if their policy guidelines, for instance current budget cuts, are not supporting the goals that organizations see as important.

The respondents offer various solutions for improvement of cooperation and coordination. For example, the cooperation between different tracks should be based on reciprocity. NGO's should also get information of the MFA's mediation activities and knowledge. MFA is only a financier but it would not need to be only donor-financed relationship. For example, if there would be money, a peace mediation institute could be founded, which would take care of all the coordination, training, communications and important announcements, similar to CMC on the crises management sector. Furthermore, it was suggested, that reporting and information sharing could be improved on, for instance, what Finland is actually concretely doing. One suggestion to this was to create so called 'light network structures', such as national monitoring groups or mentoring, which are based on voluntary information sharing and coordination but not so strictly that the MFA would coordinate. Then again, one respondent believes that we need coordination and that information flow and expertise could be developed. It was also proposed that the MFA or CMC should do a directory (roster) and that a forum or a platform where there would be collective information should be created. However, one respondent strongly disagrees that MFA would be best suited to maintain a contact database. Another idea is, that the supportive functions of mediation could be developed, for example, in security matters. For instance, if FCA and CMI were operating in the same country, it would be good to develop information sharing. In field projects, the main responsibility should be on only one actor and there

has to be regular meetings between the funding party and the NGO's or other track 2 operators.

Open dialogue is the best to improve cooperation. Consequently, time and resources should be improved. Though, the question is that how do you get more resources? Already the constant hurry is causing lack of communication and everyone has quite tight resources as it is. There just is not enough time for coordination and information sharing. For example, "if the MFA's regional department suggests a project in a certain country, the political section really does not have the time to call through all their partners to check up whether they have planned or are planning something over there". Not because they would like to compete but just out of pure unawareness. However, the POL 50 is trying to improve this all the time, for example with the CGM, where everyone tells what they are doing and what they have planned for the future.

It is valuable to learn by doing and to share that, also learning from others experiences. The best and most effective way to make use of the mediation networks, knowledge and expertise is to learn through concrete actions. For example, if two were operating in the same region, it would be smart to share information within that country.

"If cooperation would have this sort of a thematic base it would have substance and then the cooperation would be genuine. That kind of 'lets sit together for the principle of it' mostly does not work or lead anywhere. It has to be action oriented. When you are at the same location, then you have the readiness for an open relation with the other actor."

The MFA could work for increasing the openness. The cooperation can work when you sincerely support the others operations. However, unfortunately there is a lot of competition.

The question of need for coordination gives somewhat conflicting answers. Many of the respondents feel that there is no need for coordination at the moment as there are so few actors in Finland. The NGO's can even agree on things amongst themselves without the officials having to intervene. Yet, if Finland wants to become a significant player in mediation and be identified as such, and if there will be more actors in the future, the coordination has to be developed. At the moment, some of the respondents claim that

they mainly need a contact database so the information would not be lost if personnel changes. That roster should include information about what a person has done and how he or she succeeded so you can track easier the right kind of knowledge, skills and qualifications. Additionally, the most common request was a system where so called *lessons learned* would be compiled and stay safe for future so it could be better utilized. This is important if Finland wants to develop the mediation expertise. Although, “in the current resource situation, everyone is afraid of new binding commitments that would require something from him or her”.

Development suggestions for National Coordination Group on Mediation

In case mediation is truly considered important for Finland and there would be genuine will to develop it, then a more official advisory board where members are chosen for a four-year term could be founded. It could be under the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, so that the members would be nominated with the letter of the Ministry. This would give the advisory board a more official status so that it can present and claim reports and be the organ that asks questions. There has not been an organ like this before. At the MFA this means in practice that someone would need to take this as an additional task alongside his or her everyday work. At that point, there is no interest or resources for it anymore.

The NGO's could create a similar organ to CGM amongst themselves. But so far there has not been the need for that. At the moment there are so few organizations operating in this field in Finland that they have managed to do the coordination by themselves.

“It is not that the officials would be the only ones doing that, the NGO's can agree amongst themselves. Same actors are anyways circulating in those, so the network already exists. So in a tight spot we can arrange things by ourselves and we do not need to wait for the officials to do so.”

However, most of the interviewees' share an opinion that, there is no need for more mediation forums because people do not have the time to attend many different ones but the existing ones should be better coordinated. In practise, this refers to CGM and NDC.

One possibility could be to formalize CGM as an advisory organ and ask the minister to nominate the people to it. That is, if CGM is wanted to be made more visible within the government. As a reference, this is how it is done in human rights issues. The CGM is good but it has to get more political weight, meaning that it should be officialised. The officialising refers to appointing the members, making it a body that can originate proposals and ask for clarifications and reports from the Ministry, and that it would be either operating under the ministry or then the human rights affairs department. At the moment responsibility of steering CGM is a circulating post at the MFA so the quality standard of it varies. In fact, there has been talk that CGM would be developed into more systematic. There are various plans about what that could mean in practice. First it needs to be clarified where do they aim with that systematic activity. Systematic nature and predictability are good things but then there needs to be a particular goal and function that it serves. This brings us to a new question, what would this goal be for the CGM? How the interviewees perceive the CGM and what they wish to get out of it might provide an answer.

The interviews point out, that there is potential in the CGM forum but in practice it could be more effective. There should be more regular and consistent reporting, for example, per project from the central regions, occasional reports from the mediation special representatives doings, and reporting on what the organizations are doing. At the moment it is more about what the MFA is doing and what are their emphasizes but they have heard less about what the NGO's are doing. It could be an information-sharing meeting and it should be more systematically and thematically organized. It would be also beneficial to go through the minutes of previous meetings. This would give the meetings continuum and make them more systematic. Furthermore, it would help to make use of the previous meetings insights and improve the procedures. Development of National Dialogue Conference will also bring improvement to the situation, as it is also a meeting with a coordinative function, nationally and internationally. Furthermore, the CGM has a lot of different kinds of organizations that are not actually directly dealing with mediation. Obviously the MFA cannot deny participation from some organizations. One solution is to organize smaller sub groups or thematic meetings.

CGM works for information sharing but it needs more genuine conversation on a concrete level. In addition, CGM needs more accurate goals, possibly a country specific focus or going through specific case examples. It would be good to have some electronic channel in between the meetings because there are not that many meetings after all. It could be an e-mail list, although these do not work that well, or some other electronic mean.

4.2. Finland's mediation

Finnish mediations strength is that Finland has experience, very good individuals and a good reputation. Even being an EU member, Finland is still considered a neutral actor. "Some countries money is refused due to political reasons, Finland's money was never. In that sense we are neutral." Furthermore,

"Finnish people are very pragmatic. They are not too fiery and do not have any bigger antipathy or empathy towards anyone. Finnish people can maintain their coolness and common sense and be rational towards all parties".

The only way to act as a mediator is just that, to not have sympathy towards one or another.

Finland's history in peace work is also impressive. For instance, Finland took part in the UN's first peacekeeping missions. Moreover, Finland is used to be in between the two parties. "Former Foreign Minister once praised that it is good we don't have too many people so that the coordination does not get difficult". Hence, another good thing is that the actors in this field are known well to each other. However, "the old model in which tasks are divided organically (by itself) is not adequate if you want to develop Finnish expertise in mediation. We need better co-ordination". Few of the respondents agree that in Finland the mediation structures themselves are not in good condition when everyone is doing their own thing. "Mediation development was launched only on Stubb's parliamentary term but it has already grown to be perhaps the most important". This can be seen as a positive feature. Because Finland is so new with mediation, there are no rigid ways and the views are still liberal and broad-minded.

The Action Plan on Mediation contains examples on how the MFA could coordinate. “Mediation action plan is very convincing, and after reading it one believes that Finland will be a great power of mediation, but in the end it all crashes because of money. The economic situation clearly is a major weakness.” However, the Action Plan on Mediation was drafted in 2011 and only since that action plan this all started. So mediation coordination has been done only four years. For example, the national CGM was founded in 2011 so it is still very fresh.

Finland's policy focus is to involve civil society actors (NGO's), but also the status of women and their involvement in peace processes. In that Finland has extensive knowhow. Still, half of the respondents do not think that ‘women's issues’ is Finland's own niche or specialization because many others stress that as well. “1325 network is maintained exemplarily but this is not it for Finland”.

The interviews confirm that Finland's area of expertise in international mediation and peace work is institutional development. Finland has supported the international organizations a lot in their mediation development. For instance, Finland has sent Finnish experts and promoted the resolution processes to get some kind of international norms for what mediation is and how it should be done. Indeed, Finland is strongly profiled in the international mediation scene as a creator of normative basis and the structures and increasing co-ordination. Finland and Turkey founded in 2010 Friends of Mediation group at the UN, and the following year the first resolution by them was adopted. The respective friendship groups have been established in 2014 also at the OSCE and the EU. Finland, Switzerland and Turkey are in charge of the first and Finland and Spain in the latter. Finland has also supported the AU and ASEAN in the development of mediation structures in organizations.

One respondent presented that, as an addition to normative work and to complement that, Finland's own concrete hands-on mediation operations and activities are needed and also efforts on crisis prevention. This does not necessarily refer to mediation itself. At the moment, NGO's do the concrete actions and implementation for the government.

However, in internal conflicts an external mediator is not often wanted but, above all, the development of local peacemaking capacities. External support should thus strengthen the national political dialogue, to create discussion forums for it and to enhance cooperation and agreement conclusion capabilities. Furthermore, it should facilitate, guide and assist dispute resolution between the parties. Preferably even find local mediators, who are credible and respected there.

The MFA's mediation capacity is only just emerging. The MFA's ability to support time-bound mediation (in real-time) has been strengthened with the accelerated financing procedure. However, the official procedures are still complex and time-consuming. In comparison, Norway has 15 officials at the Ministry unit, which serves a variety of mediation projects. Their financial effort is 80 million euros per year, which is more than ten times compared to Finland. Money is not in itself a solution, but it is a question of initiative and know-how. Without adequate and sustained resources, it is difficult to require or expect long-term results.

Finnish Minister Stubb called Finland 'a great power in peace mediation', but it is actually not the case, only Switzerland and Norway are really that. They are leading the international mediation. "Norway and Switzerland are light years away from the others and other Nordic countries are merely beginners". For example, at the MFA there are really two officials whose job mediation belongs to. Also, Norway and Switzerland supports their non-governmental organizations that do reconciliation and conflict prevention in quite different amounts and in different proportion. However, Finland does not need to be on the same level as Norway. Even if the money would be put in mediation now, it does not mean that Finland would be good at it immediately.

"Finland only has a few good, prominent and skilled individuals, such as Rehn, Ahtisaari and Haavisto. But there is no network around those, who would train themselves and train new schools to enter the field. Thus, it is dependent on the individual top names".

This leads to a conclusion that there is a need for mentoring programs. Also the MFA aims to develop Finland's mediation capacity very much by getting more and more officials of the Ministry into mediation training. The MFA does not have the training capabilities itself but the personnel are sent to international trainings. CMI organizes

‘gender and mediation’ training aimed for the United Nations but not more widely for outsiders or for Finnish actors. There has been talk that should Finland create a Martti Ahtisaari Academy, but so far there has not been the resources for it. Nevertheless, FCA’s *religious leaders reconciliation project* was mentioned as an excellent example of a project that raises young people into this new way of thinking.

Including religious Leaders is definitely a great innovation from Finland and Finland's own niche. It is the expertise of the FCA in particular. In certain cases the key to success is to take religion into account. It can help build local commitment and create trust. Even though Finland is not perceived as a very religious country, Finland still has a lot of ecumenical tacit know-how. Another possible future expertise area for Finland could be Erkki Tuomioja's initiative, Historians Without Borders. In today's world, limited knowledge of the history and its abuse in politics should be a growing concern and how that affects international relations. “You cannot focus only on the current problem when the roots of the problems can be far back in history”.

4.3. The role of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland

The MFA’s role in peace work and process is mainly to fund and bring political weight to operations. Furthermore, in order to get the importance of mediation acknowledged, it has to begin from the upper end of the chain. The Ministry’s role is important in that. In addition, the MFA cannot do mediation work by itself so it uses national and international NGO’s in implementing the projects that they identify. In other words, the MFA does not participate in peace negotiations themselves, except randomly ambassadors at their destinations, but normally even they do not have the time for it. As mentioned, the practical doers are taken from outside, either an organization or a consultant. Hence, the MFA mainly supports its staff in developing skills in mediation, that is, conflict knowhow, relationship management, solving conflict, negotiation and influencing, but it does not offer training itself. One view is that “by supporting the organizations the MFA specifically develops the mediation capacity of Finland”. The

stronger the NGO's that work in mediation are, the more capacity Finland has. The mediation capacity should not be solely and exclusively at the MFA and it really is not. The more the MFA can support and capacitate NGO's, the more it supports the Finnish know-how.

On a national level, some of the respondents wish that the MFA would coordinate to improve cooperation of Finnish actors and information sharing. "It would be good if someone would hold the strings and know where all the Finnish actors are operating. For that the MFA would be most natural." CGM is a good initiative but its function should be developed. The respondents feel that the MFA has already taken an unofficial role by starting the CGM. However, the MFA is not really in charge as the Finnish NGO's have the freedom to operate as they please. Also "the MFA funding is used with quite loose framework agreements so it is not that strict". There is quite good trust between Finnish actors. There is a belief, that every NGO is doing things so that the MFA can stand behind them and that their actions are not against the foreign policy of Finland.

In general, openness to new approaches and modes of operations would be preferable. "Hesitation and over-cautious 'no-attitude', is not conducive to mediation". Conflict situations are diplomatically sensitive and challenging. Consideration and knowledge of the political realities are necessary. But it is a crisis and an exceptional circumstance, which often requires an unusual approach to solve the problem. MFA could develop the international 'friends of mediation' groups so that they would have information sharing also with unofficial actors. The MFA's role could include also facilitation and assistance to local actors. Furthermore, one respondent wishes that the MFA would have more active support for mediation work, for example, when organizing meetings with the counterparties. At the moment it is hard to bring people here because of the visas and permits.

The MFA presence brings prestige to the process, even if there is no own agenda in the peace process. However, if the MFA would be primarily in charge of mediation

activities (*budget, facilitation, upholding dialogue and interaction, drafting the action plan, building national mediation capacity*) a big part of the operations would be cut off. Official actors repel participants and the conflict parties. In addition, it is difficult for governmental actors to deal with parties who are not recognized entities or governmental actors. 'Pre pre talks' are often that kind where you have to have deniability. Still, two interviewees feel that if Finland wants to be a strong actor, then the planning should go to the MFA, at least funding and enabling of projects.

Sharing the responsibility between different Finnish actors provides diverse knowhow and unofficial opportunities. As pointed out many times earlier, government cannot take part in everything for political reasons. That can cause a conflict between countries. For that reason, the actual practical doers are needed from the non-governmental side.

Government has its own networks, namely other governments and international organizations, and the NGO's have their own. There is no need to intervene with that. The MFA is interested in Finnish organizations and how they are operating in the field and how they can strengthen, complement and enhance Finland's foreign political goals. At the same time it is a source of pride that Finland does not control too much and allows room for NGO's own endeavours.

Mediation is a long-term effort, where strong local knowledge, building confidential personal relationships and the presence are basis for everything. Peace is not mediated by popping in briefly. This is a particularly relevant issue as it obviously calls for resources from the MFA but the new government programme drastically cut down the necessary development funds. This effectively reduces the operational and development possibilities of the MFA in regards to mediation. The MFA has met some of the needs of the NGO's by creating the rapid response fund. However, all of the respondents agree, that peace work needs more resources. One interviewee speculated, that the "development funds were reduced partly because it is difficult to monitor or verify the value gained for the money."

5. DISCUSSION

This chapter answers to the research question with the goal of producing concrete recommendations. Main research question is *how to manage mediation networks in Finland?* First part summarizes and emphasizes the main findings according to the six investigative questions. First section illustrates how the mediation networks in Finland are managed and the second section takes the ideas from investigative question six (Q6) further to how the networks should or could be managed. The second part discusses the observations, provides recommendations based on the researchers own conclusions and the background theory, and finishes with an answer to the main research question. Finally, there is a review on the quality, credibility and substantive significance of this study.

5.1. Main findings

Q1. What are the background, experience and level of involvement of the respondent in relation to mediation?

The relation between opinions and the experience level from mediation, or the governmental or NGO background, was one aspect to observe from the interviews. For example, are there differences in how much experience the respondent has in relation to how important they see the coordination of mediation networks? That particular question offered conflicting answers as instantly many replied that there is no need for it but then later in the interview they brought up elements of the mediation field and its coordination that clearly needs improvement. However, only very slight connection to the experience level or to the industry sector was found. Surprisingly the responses and opinions divided quite randomly despite the background.

The few observations in this regard were that the more experience the respondent had in mediation, the more open and bold suggestions about its development they had. In

addition, they dared to be more straightforward in the interview situation. However, this was not the case in questions relating to coordination, sharing contacts and information, outside control and general rules, as if there was a slight protective attitude or worry of losing the exclusive status and leading position. Furthermore, if the questions could have had concrete influence in the workload of the respondent, there was a slightly more sceptical attitude towards those. For example, questions regarding responsibility of coordination, creating and maintaining a roster or a databank and should one entity be in charge of mediation, which might entail combining the resources and experience into one unit or a separate institute, received non-supportive answers and the justification was often made a resource issue but also a political issue. In general, the ones whose work the decisions would touch the most were more hesitant towards systematic development and towards new and innovative methods. However, it has to be pointed out that representatives of the government are tied to the official policies and confidentiality up to a certain extent so that could have played a role in some interviews. Still, there was no significant or clear division of opinions with regards to the governmental or NGO background or the amount of mediation experience.

Q2. How is the cooperation between different mediation actors in the respondent's case and on a national level?

Cooperation between different actors is close in Finland, partly due to the small circles. Furthermore, cooperation is based on strong mutual trust and openness. MFA is tied to virtually every NGO operating in mediation field through its funding and they also use that to control possible overlaps in mediation projects. Furthermore, NGO's do the practical implementation of the projects the MFA identify. NGO's cooperate with each other in many ways except in actual field projects. Still, there are very little overlaps due to the fact that their roles are quite different and they operate in different mediation cases. In fact, most respondents see that there is need for coordination only if it is seen politically important and Finland wants to develop in that area in the future or if the actors would increase. At the moment, there is hardly any official coordination in mediation field in Finland except for the national Coordination Group on Mediation,

which is MFA's unofficial body. Even there, the main purpose has been information sharing and not so much the actual coordination.

In general, the cooperation is fairly good but when the reality is compared with the theory it shows that there is a gap and a lot of potential for improvement. Most complain about the dysfunctional information flow, scarce information, inadequate contact details, occasionally overlapping projects and competition over meagre and diminishing funds. The competition about funding can lead to 'project mentality' (discussed in chapter 2.3.2) and other potential threats like questionable priorities. Competition in general can result in harmful actions like withholding information.

Furthermore, majority of the respondent's think that the core purpose of the CGM would need to be clearer and more specific and that its status should be officialised into government policies to gain real political weight. Also, the NGO's could agree and coordinate more amongst themselves than they currently do. This leads to the conclusion that coordination is in fact necessary between Finnish actors and should be developed already.

However, rules related to cooperation and to division of work in mediation field are not that simple to create. Everyone wants coordination but in reality nobody wants to be coordinated. Outside supervision and general binding rules, particularly only for Finland, are not taken positively. However, utilizing existing international rules such as UN's peace mediation guidance and developing good practices based on those or in general, and/or voluntary self controlling and monitoring is accepted. General rules are also a question of seeing the benefit of cooperation greater than each actor trying to maximize its own benefit. It is paradoxal when organizations seek and compete over fame and publicity in order to get good will and funding for operations but at the same time they might damage their trustworthiness and reputation as a cooperative partner and as a mediation actor and thus undermine their aspirations in it. Furthermore, if there would be rules, it is essential that who should set them, an official party for the political weight and credibility, or should all actors decide on the rules jointly. For example, it

could be favourable for the receiving end to have supervision and control of the funding, as there is only one main financier of mediation activities, the MFA. Furthermore, organizations can get the funding from elsewhere and then act on their own if they have good enough contacts in a certain place. Hence, the MFA's funding based control does not reach those cases but general rules would.

Q3. How is the communication and information sharing in the field of mediation?

The communication between different actors in Finland is described as open and cooperative. The cooperation is done via all traditional means of communication but the new media and communication tools are not much utilized. Most respondents follow social media on a personal level but it is not systematic, for instance, that the communication department would follow and compile information through social media to their announcements or reports. In actual mediation, nothing can replace personal contact and conversation. Especially the first contact has to be face-to-face. In addition, the confidential information can only be shared within a restricted group. The main challenges for information flow are the sensitive nature, lack of resources and time, and competition. Moreover, the results of a mediation operation are not easily measurable with clear indicators and can be difficult to prove. Therefore, it is more challenging to determine those and share that information.

Furthermore, no one is in charge or responsible for information sharing between different actors or to public and there is no centralized information channel relating to mediation so everyone needs to put their own effort to gather the information but then there are no resources for analysing the compiled information. Information sharing is based on believe and trust that all who are involved get the necessary information because in Finland the mediation circles are small and the MFA is connected to all actors through funding. The MFA has taken an unofficial role as a coordinator by initiating the national Coordination Group on Mediation. The main purpose of the group is information sharing, not so much the actual coordination. However, even there the information sharing is not systematic but based on voluntary information exchange.

Still, at the moment, that is the main instrument for communication and cooperation between different actors in Finland.

Q4. How are Finland's mediation scene and the support network relating to it?

Finland's mediation is very recent and it started because it was considered beneficial for Finland's country brand. There are only a few actors in that field. In fact, three actors take part in actual mediation but not the MFA, mainly for political reasons. The rest of the CSO's have functions that support mediation. Finland's strengths in mediation are that it has very good individuals, respectable reputation, it is considered a neutral actor, and its experience and history in peace work is impressive. Finland is strongly profiled in the international mediation scene as a creator of normative basis and the structures and increasing co-ordination.

Finland itself does not have a strategic interest or a consistent strategy for mediation, even though an action plan on mediation was drafted in 2011 with the aim to strengthen Finland's role in mediation. Furthermore, the action plan stresses the importance of networking as a main approach to be applied both in international as well as in domestic context. However, executing the action plan takes resources, which the government does not have. There is also avoidance of binding commitments and negative attitudes towards change and increase in personal responsibilities. The key question is that is mediation truly considered politically significant.

Mediation work relies on networks. Contacts are sought after in various ways, for instance with the help of representative offices and through partners and personal contacts. In Finland, mainly MFA maintains, coordinates and is responsible of the Finnish mediation networks. The different actors meet in various seminars, trainings or latest at the National Coordination Group on Mediation, where almost everyone is invited to, as there is no participant screening to it. At the same time, there is no official roster or record of the different actors and their projects. That is above all a resource question but also a matter of the will and practicalities like whose responsibility it

would be to maintain, who has access to that information, what level information to include to it, who to include to it and how to keep it reliable and up-to-date. At the moment, the contact and other mediation information are maintained in various unofficial lists or then considered and kept as personal equity. This stresses the importance of the lead figures and imposes a threat of losing an important contact when an employee leaves.

In Finland every actor in mediation field does their own thing and the tasks get divided organically. Hence, it can be concluded that the mediation structures are not in place. Furthermore, if Finland wants to be a strong actor in mediation and develop Finnish expertise the current model is not adequate. However, because Finland is so new with mediation, there are no rigid ways and the views are still mostly liberal and broad-minded. This is an advantage and the structures can be developed fully functional before the coordination and cooperation gets set in its ways.

Q5. What is the role of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in mediation activities?

At the moment, the MFA's role in peace work and processes is mainly to fund and bring political weight to operations. The Finnish government cannot take part in all aspects of mediation for political reasons so it uses national and international NGO's in implementing the projects that it identifies. In other words, MFA does not have own concrete mediation activities even if it has increased the preparedness for it. Still, the MFA supports its staff in developing skills and knowhow in mediation.

However, the MFA has taken an unofficial coordinative role by starting the CGM and by choosing which projects to fund. Yet, one significant observation is that, on the contrary to initial hypothesis, MFA is not necessarily the only or the best option to manage and coordinate the mediation networks. Mediation networks are a complex mechanism. The NGO's could for example coordinate activities among themselves as those 'light networks' already exist between them. However, the MFA's role is

important in getting the acknowledgement for mediation starting from the upper end of the governmental chain.

The MFA evaluates and funds its partners on development policy grounds, which is a challenge because in mediation the indicators are not as clear as in development cooperation. It is difficult for the MFA and also to NGO's to monitor or prove the value gained for the money and that might be partly the reason why development funds were reduced. Nevertheless, mediation is a long-term effort so steady resources are essential. In order to get MFA funding, the projects have to fit MFA's portfolio and be within their budget frame. In addition, the NGO has to be an established actor and have enough expertise and staff to fulfil the plan. As discussed in chapter 2.3.2, there are potential threats in this funding role. For example, if the NGO's plan their activities according to MFA's wishes to secure the funding or blindly fulfil already an outdated plan.

Q6. What improvement suggestions do the respondents offer for the coordination of mediation networks within Finland?

The interviews offered abundance of suggestions to improve the coordination of mediation networks in Finland. The development is dependant on three factors. Firstly, is mediation considered politically significant, and if yes, then the conditions for it need improvement. Secondly, the resistance to change and avoidance of personal responsibility and binding commitments needs to be tackled. Finally, mediation capacity development needs consistency and steady and adequate resources.

At the moment the leading part in mediation falls on someone based on natural pruning, which springs from various interests and expertise areas of the organizations. This will not be adequate in the future if there will be more actors or if Finland attempts to develop its mediation capacity and preparedness. There needs to be better coordination and institutionalized structures in order to have an efficient mediation scene and to be able to utilize the full potential of the expertise and existing mediation networks.

One solution is to agree on specific roles based on each organizations expertise area so that there would not be any overlapping, in a similar way that in the humanitarian section. Another suggestion is to found a more official advisory board where members are chosen for a four-year term. It could be, for example, under the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, so that the members would be nominated with the letter of the Ministry. Of course, there are alternatives to that. CGM could be developed to this direction but it would need to be given a more official status. So called 'light network structures', which are based on voluntary information sharing and coordination, such as monitoring groups or mentoring programs should be established. It could be called, for instance, Martti Ahtisaari Academy, which would be specialized in training and mentoring programs among other things.

Combining the existing resources concretely is also a possible solution to improve coordination but another complex issue. In practice that means combining the MFA's units or different NGO's, or creating a separate mediation unit or a mediation institute. The larger mediation unit within the MFA or the separate mediation institute of Finland, could take care of the funding, coordination, training and communications among other things. At the moment, the separate MFA units already need one another to initiate mediation projects because they have different expertise areas and functions, for instance, regional knowledge or knowledge of the political realities in mediation. This then again speaks for closer cooperation between the MFA units if not even combining the units. However, which functions to merge and what level projects would be covered in the combined unit are the questions. Merging the national NGO's can also turn out too complicated because of differing values, functions and organizational structures but still it can be worth investigating. Furthermore, how much the values of the mediator play a role in actual mediation and in everyday activities is another question. Most NGO's in Finland have similar principal values or at least they do not conflict with each other.

Perhaps a more attainable way to utilize the strengths of existing resources is to found a mediation capacity development network or then CGM could be officialised and

developed towards this direction. Additionally, CSOs could found a similar organ to CGM and agree on mediation related matters themselves. However, most respondents felt that there is no need for more mediation forums because people do not have the time to attend many different ones but the existing ones should be better coordinated.

There are many development suggestions for the national Coordination Group on Mediation. It should be more systematic. But then there needs to be an accurate and particular goal and a function that it serves. Thus, the first thing to do is to clarify that aim for CGM. In order to advance CGM into more systematic, there should be more regular and consistent reporting. For example, reporting per project from the central regions, occasional reports from the mediation special representatives endeavours, and reporting on what the organizations are doing. Additionally, the meetings should be more systematically and thematically organized because it needs more genuine conversation on a concrete level. In practice, the meetings could have a country specific focus, there could be specific case examples, and they could be organized in smaller sub groups or as thematic meetings. Furthermore, going through the minutes of previous meetings would bring continuance and enable enhancement. It would be good to have some electronic channel in between the meetings to continue the conversation and develop the ideas further.

Information sharing and availability was seen one of the main areas to develop. Cooperation and learning from each other is most effective and genuine when it is based on substance and concrete actions, for instance, cooperation on cases in a mutual operation region. Hence, a collective data bank of lessons learned, a roster of the mediation actors and networks, and truly open dialogue would improve the coordination and cooperation. They would also facilitate future development and ensure that information would not be lost in transitions. At the moment, no one is officially in charge or responsible for information sharing between different actors and there is no centralized place to get or put the information collectively so everyone needs to use their own time to gather it. However, the reality is that there is not enough time for coordination and information sharing so that should be the main focus.

The MFA should work for increasing openness and coordinate to improve cooperation of Finnish actors and information sharing. The more the MFA can support and capacitate CSO's, the more it supports the Finnish know-how and the creation of original and innovative initiatives such as 'historians without borders' and FCA's religious leaders aspect. Additionally, as the MFA has already taken an unofficial coordinative role, it could keep track of where all the Finnish actors are operating. As mentioned earlier, CGM is a good initiative but its function should be developed. Furthermore, the MFA should be more progressive and open to new approaches and modes of operations. For example, it could take forward the information sharing between international 'friends of mediation' groups with unofficial actors.

Finland needs to decide whether to engage in concrete hands-on mediation operations and activities and in what extent. If the decision is in favour of it, then the methods to use and goal should be to strengthen the national political dialogue, to create discussion forums for it, to enhance cooperation and agreement conclusion capabilities. Furthermore, it should facilitate, guide and assist dispute resolution between the parties and support local actors who are credible and respected there. Additionally, to facilitate mediation in Finland, there should be more flexible practicalities with visas and permits to bring the key people to Finland. The MFA should take this forward.

Furthermore, general rules or then more flexible guidelines about good practices are recommendable. For example, regarding closer NGO cooperation and information sharing in field projects, particularly if they are operating in the same region. In general, it would be beneficial to make more use of the complementarity and at the same time avoid double work and overlaps.

Moreover, controlling the activities of NGO's who receive funding outside the MFA is not possible without a set of common guidelines. This is why mediation should also be in government programs in a central role and in the foreign policy program. The guidelines need to come from an official entity, such as the MFA or an advisory board,

if they are meant to have political weight or be decided jointly among all the actors in general meetings and possibly then be officialised with the help from an official party. If latter, there needs to be a more official forum for it.

However, most respondents raised a concern about the NGO's freedom to operate up to a certain extent and to decide about their own activities so that the government would not strictly command. This is a question of the limits of the guidelines. It has to be defined what aspects of the NGO's operations to include and where the control should stay at the NGO.

5.2. Conclusions, recommendations and further research

This section complements and processes further some of the suggestions provided in the interviews. This is done by first defining what are the principal problems and then attempting to find solutions how to tackle them. Finland is new with mediation. Hence, there are no rigid ways yet and the views are still liberal and broad-minded. The researcher hopes to take advantage of this fact and produce attainable recommendations with the consideration of existing realities. The recommendations are mainly based on researchers own conclusions but they also utilize the best practices and guidelines introduced in the theoretical frame of reference.

The researcher identifies and summarizes the main problems as follows: lack of resources and time, competition, information sharing and availability, lack of political will and awareness of mediations importance, inadequate mediation structures, CGM is not systematic enough or functional as it is, mediation expertise relies on few top names, avoidance of binding commitments and new methods, difficulty to measure and prove results, no one is officially in charge of mediation activities, concrete mediation actions are needed, and stability, consistency and long-term commitments. These problems relate to one another and by improving one the others can develop as well.

Even if mediation is proven to be useful and beneficial for Finland in many ways, it does not get enough concrete support. As mentioned in the interviews and in the theory, the actual problem is lack of political will. (Nick Grono 2008: 450.) For this reason, “it is necessary to raise awareness and highlight the increasing importance of mediation in conflict prevention and resolution” (Kanerva 2012: 109). The significance of mediation should be made known to decision makers and to public. Barnes stresses the power of CSO’s in generating political will amongst decision-makers (Barnes 2006: 16). CSO’s should do this with all means necessary, for example, lobby government and parliamentarians and create advertising campaigns. However, this is too big of a challenge for anyone alone but if all actors in the mediation field combine forces and do this jointly it could be possible. Awareness and political will might effectively lead to increased funding, stability to mediation efforts and enhanced expertise in mediation with training, mentoring and light structures. This could be one goal for example for the CGM.

Joint efforts requires cooperation and coordination. Effective cooperation needs set mechanisms for interaction and working together (Barnes 2006: 24). Furthermore, cooperation is seen crucial for the development of Finnish mediation. According to experts, a holistic network model is the best approach for Finland. It is feasible, flexible and allows rapid and efficient reaction and exchange of information. (Jaarva et al. 2012: 103–105; Brummer & Piiparinen 2012: 12–13.) Yet, there is a clear gap between how much the cooperation is highlighted throughout the Finnish foreign policy and the MFA’s agendas and what the actual practice is. It is still fairly cautious, concrete actions are minimal, the changes are slow and the general attitude towards cooperation is perhaps a bit sceptical. The following caption is just one example of the fact that binding terms and commitments are avoided. “The development of Finland’s mediation concept together with civil society experts is to be considered” (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland 2011: 26).

Furthermore, how much of an emphasis foreign policy can get depends on competing issues, such as healthcare or tax reforms (Barnes 2006: 12). The question is whether to

tackle the conflicts in advance with preventive methods such as mediation or to deal with the consequences with crises management and increased social welfare costs, which is more expensive in the end. “The goal should be to move ‘from reaction to prevention’.” (Ibid. 13.) In addition, the focus should be on concrete effective action instead of just principles, planning and talk (Ibid. 31). The change has to start from the top and it needs to be supported in a concrete way.

The researcher identifies resources related problems fundamental. It is necessary to find innovative ways to generate high quality results with the existing resources, to assure stable funding, deal with accountability issues, and to improve monitoring and measuring to validate the value for money. However, the solutions to resource problems are not perhaps as easily achievable. That said, mediation funding should come from its own allocation and it should have its own assessment indicators that are different to cooperation funding. For example, a separate mediation unit at the MFA could be directly in charge of the peacebuilding budget (Kerkkänen 2012: 123). Should an institute be founded, it could be at least partly funded with membership fees like in Switzerland (Barnes 2006: 25). Closer cooperation with the Nordic countries could also alleviate some of the financial strains (Joenniemi & Lehti 2014: 46, 48). In addition, some of the funds from defence cooperation, that Nordic countries have plenty of, could be allocated into development cooperation, peace work and mediation.

Furthermore, the possibility to utilize donor group model in Finland should be investigated. The useful aspects of these donor groups are better coordination, joint or even democratic decision-making, larger projects and the strong emphasis on the financial side, so the funding would be guaranteed. In addition, the possibility to extend coordination to donors in the future should be investigated more. Moreover, Barnes (Ibid. 28–29.) suggests a solution to accountability where it comes through peer reviews and benchmarking so that the donors themselves are not accountable for the funds. For instance, national Coordination Group on Mediation could act as a forum for this. Barnes continues, monitoring mechanisms and funding for both partnership and planning exercises should be incorporated into policies (Ibid. 22).

Functional chains of communications can be established by designing and using systems that enable constant communication, sharing information and updating all actors across the tracks, joint assessment of the situation, coordination of contacts, and by integrating personnel, resources, strategies and operations. (Wigell 2012: 20–21)

There are various digital solutions that would be worth exploring to enhance the cost efficiency and time management. Presently they are not much utilized. For example, social media management tools such as Hootsuite would be a huge benefit for the MFA's communications department or to any relevant party for collecting and sharing information. At the moment, no one is in charge or responsible for information sharing between different actors and there is no place to get or put the information collectively so everyone needs to use their own time to gather it. It would save a lot of time to have a centralized channel for information.

In general, to save time and effort, it would be beneficial to make more use of the complementarity and at the same time avoid double work and overlaps. For example, if the sensitivity allows it, there should be some system, possibly a website that shows all the projects where a Finnish organization or the government is taking part in. That could also include information about which organizations are operating there and who is in charge and of what. This would make it easier to contact the relevant parties if necessary. However, due to the sensitive nature, this might be applicable only to a part of the mediation cases or then only as a post project lessons learned type of information. Could it be a public website is another matter to investigate.

Such a website or databank could include more comprehensively all soft and hard security related information because the projects often relate to one another. This would also support Finland's comprehensive approach to conflict prevention and crises management. Additionally, it would increase transparency, ease coordination and ensure information recording and availability. Transparency in funding and in access to information might also reduce competition and possibly increase cooperation when there are visibly clear reasons and justifications why a particular organization is supported and what they are doing. Furthermore, this would increase accountability.

However, there exists the threat that organizations would plan activities according to MFA's needs or go through with outdated plans. Although, CSO peer reviews regarding the project necessity could provide a solution.

Furthermore, Hocking et al. (2012: 6.) discuss the need for innovative methods and digital solutions to answer the financial pressures targeted to diplomatic work in the future. These financial pressures focus also to mediation and thus concern the entire mediation field. As the interviews indicated, there is a need for a contact database (roster). This recommendation is also supported in the theory (Hocking et al. 2012: 6; Barnes 2006: 22). Already in 2011 it was stated by the MFA that a list of experts who are interested in mediation should be maintained. For this to be possible sufficient resources should be set to mediation related tasks. (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland 2011: 18–19.) Roster is essential for coordination. It should include all the CSO actors, both individual experts and organizations. Hence, a roster should have some categorization that helps to analyse the actors and assists the search for partners with a specific expertise. The categorization could include what the person has done, the expertise areas and the level of experience in them. Estimating the successfulness and personal recommendations might be too subjective.

For this to be attainable, it should require as little effort from the party that maintains it as possible but still be an official party. The researcher suggests that the MFA would create a mediation expert database, possibly in connection with the general mediation information website that has the lessons learned and all the ongoing cases listed. The registration and having a profile there should be voluntary based and a responsibility of the experts themselves but the MFA could verify the profile to keep it more reliable. In this way it would not strain the MFA too much after the initial work. The MFA can then contact the experts related to their expertise if necessary or directly recommend and send the contact details to international partners. This would also assure that information reaches all relevant parties.

Barnes (2006: 24.) agrees that it is necessary to “strengthen capacities to develop shared and complementary strategies amongst groups working in the same geographic area and amongst groups working on similar thematic areas in prevention and peacebuilding”. This can be done by first creating a roster and categorizing actors, then combining them based on similar thematic or area categorization and finally organizing meetings based on those. (Ibid. 24.) Thus, roster is the first step and that supports the CGM as well.

The potential in the civil society is very little used because often there is no systematic working procedures or effective practices. This requires acknowledging the legitimacy of CSO's in peace matters. They “should be seen as complementing partners with valuable contributions”. (Ibid. 7–9).

One of the key development areas is that there needs to be more institutionalized structures. The simplest and most attainable solution is to utilize the existing capacities such as national Cooperation Group on Mediation and make it a functional and useful body. There is not necessarily the need for one party to be in charge if there are semiofficial bodies that truly take things forward like the CGM with an improved status, function and clear goals. The participants themselves can set the goals but then they should be committed to follow through with them. According to Wigell (Wigell 2012: 21), all participants in mediation should agree on the specific plan to guide operations and on both short-term and long-term commitments of each actor.

Thus, CGM should be evaluated and monitored in order to keep to the goals but also to further develop it. For example, minutes of the meetings help to keep track of what was discussed and decided and to see what has been done to it by the next meeting. Furthermore, a feedback questionnaire from the participant after the meetings could be used as a measurement tool to indicate how successful the CGM has been and how it could be developed. A simple questionnaire would be sufficient in the beginning but in time the measurement indicators could be refined to better suit the needs. The current government programme emphasizes the need to improve the effectiveness, impact and measurability of development cooperation (Valtioneuvosto 2015a: 33). This simple monitoring could also be useful to demonstrate to the government the effectiveness of mediation work and value for money. In addition, this can be done with very minimum

effort. Though, how that valuable information from meetings and from the questionnaires is handled is essential. Someone has to be responsible of it to the CGM. Most natural choice would be the person who is officially in charge of CGM at the MFA.

The CGM needs concrete goals and agenda. CGM could be used for developing policy frameworks and the action plans to implement them, even if it is not an official entity. As Barnes (2006: 20.) states, CSO's have 'discursive legitimacy' in their analysis of the problems and the moral voice. If there would be an official mediation advisory board with the power to ask for results from the government the CSO's could affect policy development and legislative processes better. However, CGM could already produce clear proposals, initiatives and bills that can be taken forward to decision makers. CGM could have separate smaller working groups on specific cases with the aim to produce concrete solutions.

The better the proposals are prepared for the decision makers, the more likely they are considered. After all, the decision makers are just humans with limited time and capacity to internalize things and prepare proposals themselves. This could serve as a goal for CGM and it would take its function to a new and more meaningful level. Obviously, CGM could foster close relationship between decision makers and CSO's as well. As Barnes (2006: 15.) points out, building personal relationships enable successful cooperation between CSO's and governments. Furthermore, it is more likely to have an effective and collaborative working relationship when all parties have mutual understanding, share same goals and there is trust between them. The possibility to build stronger relationships to decision makers would also increase the interest of the CSO's to be present and participate at the CGM. Consequently, the meetings need to include key people who can take decisions and information further in their organizations. Consequently, this might deal with some of the crowdedness of CGM when the people truly need to have a legitimate role in the group.

Moreover, if a decision is made at the CGM, the concrete steps to fulfil the plan have to be decided right then and there. Otherwise it will be just talk and voluntary information sharing as it has been so far. Thus, a person should always be assigned and dedicated to take that particular suggestion regarding a recognized problem forward. Still, this does not mean that one person should do it alone but he or she could gather a working group for him/herself. The MFA could provide an online forum or a place for these working groups to assemble and work on their initiatives. As Wigell says, the lead actor should provide a forum for communication across the tracks (Wigell 2012: 20–21). To continue, it does not need to be the person in charge of the CGM at the MFA. However, that person could have a coordinative or a facilitative role, for example, to keep the focus in the meetings in solution orientedness and not just in talk, listing the problems and criticizing those but produce concrete results. In addition, that person could be the one to monitor the successfulness, be responsible for informing the participants of the advances and provide the forum for the working groups. Then again, this requires time and resources so there could be some incentive. Another option is that participation to CGM could require that the person is ready to take on a few of these working group assignments a year.

As mentioned, CGM would benefit from digital solutions. It would be good to have some electronic channel in between the meetings to continue the conversation and develop the ideas further. For example, there could be a discussion forum on specific topics, possibly even multiple forums to take part in at one meeting. The participants could sign into those smaller sub groups on specific topic according to their interest already in advance. This could then later act as a conversation platform related to key projects or themes identified at the meetings. The possibility to make it a public platform should be investigated. In addition, the meeting agenda could be drafted based on requests. There could be polls in advance to identify the most important issues to cover at the meeting. This does not mean that the different mediation actors should focus their efforts only to some projects in general but only at the CGM. However, this might lead to better cooperation on those specific projects outside the CGM as well. Furthermore, the MFA can stress and bring forward issues at the CGM that are in line

with the foreign policy and their goals but whether the CSO's see them as most important and whose priorities to emphasize is another matter.

A holistic view on mediation, systematic capacity building and thorough analysis of specific needs and means are essential for Finnish mediation capacity development (Kerkkänen 2012: 114–115). As a conclusion, there are many possibilities in the CGM that should be further researched and then put into concrete actions, even if the suggestions presented above would not be attainable in practice. Still, at the moment CGM is the best attempt from MFA to support CSO cooperation and to foster the relationship between government officials and the CSO's. In addition, CGM supports the utilization of the recommended network logic to mediation. It was stated that Finland is profiled as an improver of coordination and mediation structures on an international level. This should be demonstrated also on a national level.

The main research question is *how to manage mediation networks in Finland?* The word manage implies that some party would be in charge of the networks. According to the initial assumption, MFA and its public officials, more specifically the diplomats, are very much involved in mediation. Moreover, the hypothesis was that MFA has an active role in coordinating mediation. As explained in the introduction 1.1.1. and theoretical frame of reference, traditionally mediation is a diplomatic function between state officials. However, the public officials have very limited involvement and at the moment Finland's mediation networks are managed mainly with funding. In the future there is a need for institutionalized structures and coordination. A simple answer to the research question is that managing mediation networks should be done with improved CGM and by utilizing various information technology solutions such as contact database and centralized mediation databank. When the cooperation works on a national level, it facilitates and eases the international cooperation as well.

5.3. Quality, credibility and significance of the study

Hirsjärvi and Hurme (2008: 185.) discuss how reliability and validity are not the most suitable concepts to describe a qualitative interview research as they relate to measuring. The concepts are based on the thought that the researcher can reach an objective reality and truth, which is not the case in a dynamic interview where meanings are constructed context dependently. Furthermore, they argue that the terms reliability and validity should be excluded, as it is not possible to presume that the answers given in a one particular context would repeat in another situation as they originate from different circumstances. Instead of validity and reliability, Patton (2002: 542.) uses the terms quality and credibility with qualitative research. Evaluating quality depends on the criteria and credibility depends on those evaluations. Hence, they are connected, as the evaluations of quality form the basis for credibility.

Rejecting the terms validity and reliability in qualitative research does not mean that one can do research however they please. The research must still strive to reveal the perceptions of the respondents and their world as well as possible. Yet, the results of the interviews are always a product of the cooperation of the interviewer and the respondent. (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2008: 188–189.) However, even if the data collected from interviews is a product of the participants meaning construction, it does not mean that the data is bias or contaminated. The main question is how the interview generates useful information about the phenomenon of interest. (Gubrium & Holstein 2004: 155, 157.) The significance of the findings is also discussed in this chapter.

Conducting a research can be interpreted as quality monitoring. When conducting an interview the quality should be monitored throughout the research. The credibility of the interview material depends on its quality. (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2008: 185.) Quality can be pursued in advance by creating an interview structure, and by thinking what themes can be dealt more indepth and what could be the additional questions. Hirsjärvi and Hurme emphasize that theme interview method is not just about presenting the main themes. However, one can never think of all the possible questions in advance and

especially not to their formulation. (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2008: 184.) The quality of the interviews in this thesis is increased by recording and transcribing as accurately as possible.

Additionally, the researcher made notes of the overall interview situation and atmosphere to understand the effects of her actions in the interview situation. The actual interview situation differed clearly from person to person. Some respondents were very open and relaxed from the beginning but not all interviews had the same atmosphere. This was shown in the style of the speech and the formality of the entire discussion. Although, it is good to keep in mind that government officials are binded by confidentiality in certain matters. For this reason it was necessary to guarantee the anonymity to the respondents. Furthermore, some interviewees seemed to be representing their organisation more than their personal opinions and thus gave more official statements that reflect the stand of the organization. Not to say that the opinions were not their own but the interviewer interpreted the way of speaking, body language and the answers to be more formal and reserved. This was the case in three interviews. However, the questions were designed purposely so that the respondents were asked in multiple ways almost the same thing, which lead them to think about the question a bit further and more indepth. Thus, in the end, all of the respondents presented their own opinions enough to get rich information that ensures the quality.

The credibility of qualitative inquiry depends on rigorous methods but also of the credibility of the researcher and the source (Patton 2002: 552–553; Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2008: 189). Applying theme interview method and interview guide approach enhance the quality of the analysis. These strategies yield high-quality data that can be systematically analyzed with attention to issues of credibility. Data analysis method is discussed in detail in chapter 3.3.2.

The credibility of the researcher can be evaluated by the ability to generate and assess rival conclusions (Patton 2002: 552–553). The researcher strived to keep a critical view to this work and to be as objective as possible. The observations bring forward the

differing opinions and the discussion takes into consideration different possibilities utilizing the best practices from theory and interviews. Besides, the researcher does not take the information given as an unambiguous truth, for example that limited resources is an insurmountable obstacle, but still attempts to produce alternative attainable solutions. Moreover, the researcher planned the interview so that there would not be loaded interview questions. The researcher also tried to be aware of biased or untrue responses. According to Patton (Ibid. 248), these measures increase credibility. In the question design and interview situation, the researcher deliberately left out the best practices mentioned in the theory section regarding possible ways to handle mediation related operations within a country. This was to avoid insinuating ideas or lead the conversation too much and to encourage the respondents own visioning on how to improve coordination and the functionality of mediation networks. Furthermore, similar questions for all, constant evaluation during the interview process and recording and accurate transcription increase the credibility of the researcher as well. Collecting the same information from each person poses no credibility problem when each person is understood as a unique informant with a unique perspective (Patton 2002: 347).

Sources credibility refers to the respondents and to the theoretical frame of reference. Most of the literature used in this research is compilations by many experts or meta-studies. This increases the credibility of the theory sources and validates that the data used is very rich. If the interviewees have been chosen to represent a certain group, the career of each respondent can be clarified from various printed sources and by asking from others (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2008: 189). The interviewees' credibility is proven with a short background introduction that is found in the appendices (see appendix 4). In addition, the selection criterion that is based on recommendations and focuses on most information rich cases (intensity, purposeful and snowball sampling) confirms the credibility of the respondents as a source. However, the researcher also received four rejections to the interview invitation. Two because the people did not have time for it, one because of the physical distance and one because he felt he does not have enough experience nor meet the requirements set for the interviewees.

This study uses some aspects of data triangulation to increase the credibility. In triangulation the data is collected in one way, in this case interviewing, and compared to information collected from other sources. When a consensus is reached it can be seen as a validation to the data received from the respondents. Also to get the opinions of multiple people from the same organization can also be seen as data triangulation. (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2008: 39–40.) Four different MFA representatives took part in the interviews so there are multiple materials from MFA but the time and context are variable.

Qualitative findings are evaluated by their substantive significance. In practice, the analyst addresses the following questions:

“How solid, coherent, and consistent is the evidence in support of the findings? To what extent and in what ways do the findings increase and deepen understanding of the phenomenon studied? To what extent are the findings consistent with other knowledge? To what extent are the findings useful for some intended purpose?” (Patton 2002: 467)

The interviews repeated similar answers to several questions. In addition, the answers combined provide a comprehensive view of Finland’s mediation networks and their cooperation. In this way, the findings increase and deepen understanding of the phenomenon studied. Some answers, such as the need for coordination, are not coherent with the answers that clearly point out aspects in cooperation that need improvement. However, as the different elements of cooperation are broken into separate and more detailed questions in the interview, the answers provide a more truthful representation. Furthermore, the findings point out some clear gaps between the optimal situation and the reality, hence, they have discovery significance. For example, the findings do not support the excellent examples from the APM. Moreover, many of the answers are already established in the literature review, for example at the Barnes’ guideline to institutionalize conflict prevention at a national level in chapter 2.1.1 (Barnes 2006: 22), so they have confirmatory significance. However, the interviews provided also plenty of new information and thus have innovative significance. For example, concrete improvement suggestions with implementation possibilities, a realistic depiction of the phenomenon of interest and ideas to further study are shown in the findings. From this

can be concluded that the findings are useful in practice if utilized by the public officials.

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APPENDIX 1. Haastattelun rakenne (in Finnish)

Taustakysymykset henkilölle

1. Kuinka paljon ja millä tavalla olette tekemisissä rauhanvälityksessä, mikä on teidän rooli siinä?
2. Oletteko osallisena varsinaisissa rauhanvälitysprosesseissa? Millä tavoin?
3. Kuulutteko johonkin kansalliseen rauhanvälitysforumiin tai -työryhmään? Jos kyllä, niin mikä on panoksenne siinä ja millä tavoin se ryhmä toimii?

Taustakysymykset organisaatio

4. Kuinka paljon ja millä tavalla olette tekemisissä rauhanvälityksessä?
5. Onko organisaationne osallisena varsinaisissa rauhanvälitysprosesseissa? Miten?
6. Miten teette päätöksen missä projektissa/ rauhanprosessissa olla osallisena?
7. Kuinka arvioitte, seuraatte, mittaatte toimintaa tai rauhanvälitystyötä / -prosessia?
8. Miten koordinoitte toimintaa sisäisesti?

Yhteistyö eri kansallisten rauhanvälitystoimijoiden välillä teidän tapauksessa

9. Tehdäänkö seuranta ja arviointi yhdessä muiden toimijoiden kanssa, onko siinä yksi päävastuussa vai tekeekö kukin omansa?
10. Mistä saatte tukea/ rahoitusta? Millaista tukea?
11. Vaikuttaako mielestäsi ulkopuolinen rahoitus/tuki teidän toimintaan ja miten?
12. Ajatteko jonkun tietyn tahon intressejä erityisesti?
13. Millaisten toimijoiden kanssa teette yhteistyötä ja millä tavoin?
14. Miksi verkostot ovat tärkeitä teille?
15. Kuka ylläpitää, koordinoi tai on vastuussa teidän rauhanvälityskontakteista? Miten se tehdään?

16. Miten arvioitte tai analysoitte yhteistyökumppanit ja kenen kanssa tehdään yhteistyötä (mitä yhteistyökumppaneilta odotetaan)?
17. Miten yhteistyötä ja sen onnistumista arvioidaan (millaisia mittareita käytätte)?
18. Millä tavalla etsitte/ luotte uusia yhteistyökumppaneita?
19. Mitä hyviä puolia yhteistyöllä on? Miten te olette hyötynneet yhteistyöstä?
20. Millaisia ongelmia olette kohdanneet yhteistyön sujuvuudessa?
21. Miten rakennatte luottamusta/ rehellisyyttä yhteistyökumppaneidenne kanssa?
22. Miten laaditte tarkemman rauhanvälityksen ja laajemman rauhanprosessin toimintasuunnitelman? Yhdessä vai erikseen?

Yhteistyö eri rauhanvälitystoimijoiden välillä yleisesti kansallisella tasolla

23. Millaista koordinoointia on järjestöjen, yksittäisten toimijoiden, asiantuntijoiden, tutkijoiden, akateemisen puolen, viranomaistahojen (ministeriöt CMC) välillä, UM:n sisällä (työryhmiä, forumeita tai verkostoja T1 ja T2 välillä)?
24. Kuka ylläpitää, koordinoi tai on vastuussa suomen rauhanvälityskontakteista? Miten se tapahtuu?
25. Onko koordinaatiolle mielestäsi tarvetta? Miksi tai miksi ei?
26. Millaista yhteistyö eri toimijoiden välillä on tällä hetkellä/ ollut tähän asti kansallisella tasolla?
27. Mitä hyviä puolia yhteistyöllä on Suomen eri toimijoiden välillä?
28. Mitä yhteistyössä ja verkostoitumisessa Suomen eri toimijoiden välillä olisi kehitettävää ja miten sitä voisi parantaa?
29. Olisiko hyvä, että kansallisella tasolla vain yksi olisi päävastuussa (loisi yhteiset säännöt ja määräykset, hoitaisi prosessin seurannan, vaatisi tuloksia, hallinnoisi ja koordinoisi) rauhanprosesseista ja -välityksestä? Miksi tai miksi ei? Kuka se taho olisi?

30. Miten tietyt roolit sovitaan ja tehtävät jaetaan rauhanvälityksprojekteissa eri kansallisten toimijoiden kanssa?
31. Jos rauhanvälitykseen luotaisiin sääntöjä eri kansallisille/suomalaisille toimijoille, niin mitä ja millaisia ne voisivat mielestäsi olla, kuka ne loisi ja kuka niitä valvoisi?

Viestintä

32. Miten tietoa tietyistä rauhanvälityksprojekteista välitetään/ jaetaan muiden kanssa, jaetaanko?
33. Miten tietoa välitetään kaikille toimijoille yleisellä tasolla vai välitetäänkö?
34. Kuka on vastuussa tiedon kulusta eri toimijoiden välillä?
35. Onko olemassa joku keskitetty paikka, mistä kaikki saavat tietoa ja minne kaikki lataavat tietoa alalta (Esim tietopankki, jossa olisi kaikki ajankohtainen tieto)?
36. Miten eri rauhanvälityksen toimijat voisivat parhaiten hyödyntää verkostoja, asiantuntemusta ja tietoa, jota Suomesta löytyy?
37. Mitkä keinot ja kanavat ovat parhaita/tehokkaimpia vaikuttamiseen ja/tai verkostoitumiseen? Kuinka pystyy vaikuttamaan muihin toimijoihin?
38. Mistä ja miten keräätte tietoa konflikteista ja rauhanprosessiin liittyen?
39. Millä tavalla yhteydenpito ja viestintä toimii käytännössä eri toimijoiden välillä, sisäisesti, projekteissa yhteistyökumppaneiden välillä?
40. Miten yhteydenpitoa ja viestintää voisi mielestäsi parantaa? Mikä toimii ja mikä ei?
41. Onko some tai digitaaliset työkalut hyvä keino vaikuttaa ja työskennellä, miksi ja miksi ei?
42. Millä tavoin hyödynnätte tai käytätte sosiaalista mediaa yhteistyössä, yhteydenpidossa, tiedon saamisessa ja keräämisessä tai tiedottamisessa?
43. Kuinka usein järjestetään workshoppeja, työryhmiä, forumeita tai muita (vähän virallisempia) ryhmätapaamisia kansallisten rauhanvälityksen eri (T1 ja T2) toimijoiden välillä?

Suomen rauhanvälitys (rauhanvälityskapasiteetti):

- 44. Millaista on Suomen rauhanvälitys, vahvuudet, heikkoudet?
- 45. Mikä on suomen rooli ja erikoisosaamisalue?
- 46. Mitä suomen rauhanvälitys tarvitsee ja mitä resursseja suomella on?
- 47. Kuinka kehittää suomen rauhanvälityskapasiteettia?
- 48. Pitäisikö olemassa olevat resurssit/ tahot laittaa yhteen /yhdistää yhdeksi?

Ulkoministeriön rooli:

- 49. Mikä on ulkoministeriön rooli rauhanvälitystyössä / rauhanprosessissa (enimmäkseen)?
- 50. Millaista toimintaa tai roolia toivoisitte UM:lle rauhanvälitykseen liittyen?
- 51. Mitä hyviä ja huonoja puolia näet siinä, että UM olisi:
 - a. Päävastuussa esimerkiksi budjetista, fasilitoinnista (dialogin/vuorovaikutuksen ylläpitämisestä), toimintasuunnitelman laatimisesta, kansallisen välitys/sovittelu kapasiteetin rakentamisesta
 - b. Vastuu olisi jaettu yhteistyössä yhteistyökumppaneiden kanssa (KUA, CMI, TAPRI, Ulkopoliittinen instituutti, WISE, TAPRI, CMC, FIIA, SaferGlobe Finland, joku muu valtion taho)?

APPENDIX 2. Interview structure

Background questions to the interviewee (to validate the expertise and legitimacy of the interviewee)

1. How much and in what way are you involved with mediation? What is your role in it exactly?
2. Are you involved in actual mediation processes? If yes, in what way?
3. Are you a member in some national mediation forum or work group? If yes, what is your part in it/ contribution to it and how does the group function?

Background questions about the organization

4. How much and in what way is your organization involved with mediation?
5. Is your organization involved in actual mediation processes? If yes, in what way?
6. How do you make a decision on what project /peace process to participate in?
7. How do you evaluate, monitor or measure your operations or peace work /process?
8. How do you coordinate activities internally?

Cooperation between different national mediation actors in your case

9. Is the monitoring and evaluation done together with other actors, does one actor have a lead responsibility or does each actor do their own?
10. Where do you get support or resources? What kind of support do you get?
11. Does external funding/support in your opinion affect your operations in some way? If yes, how?
12. Are you looking for someones interests in particular?
13. What kind of actors are you cooperating with and in what way exactly?
14. Why networks are important to you?

15. Who is responsible for, maintains or coordinates your mediation contacts? How is it done?
16. How do you evaluate or analyse your cooperation partners and who to cooperate with? What is expected from a cooperation partner?
17. How is the cooperation itself and its successfulness evaluated (what measurements you use)?
18. How do you look for new cooperation partners?
19. What are the benefits of cooperation in your case?
20. What problems have you met regarding cooperation?
21. How do you build trust and honesty with your cooperation partners?
22. How do you design the action plan for mediation specifically and/or for broader peace process? Together or separately with partners?

Cooperation between different national mediation actors on a general level

23. What kind of coordination is there between organizations, individual actors, experts, researchers, academic sector, official governmental bodies or within the MFA?
24. Who maintains, coordinates or is responsible for Finland's mediation contacts? How does it happen exactly?
25. In your opinion, is there need for coordination? Please explain why or why not?
26. What is the cooperation like or has been so far between different national mediation actors?
27. What are the good sides in cooperation between the different national actors?
28. What could be improved in the cooperation and networking between the different national mediation actors?
29. Would it be good if only one would take the lead responsibility nationally over mediation and peace processes (makes rules and regulations, takes care of the

monitoring, demands results, manages and coordinates)? Why or why not? Who would that party be?

30. How are the specific roles agreed or divided in mediation projects between different national actors?
31. If rules for mediation would be set for different national actors then what could they be like, who would create them and who would control them?

Communications

32. How is the information of a particular mediation project shared with other actors or is it shared?
33. On a general level, how is mediation related information shared to all the actors or is it?
34. Who is responsible for sharing the information between different actors?
35. Is there a centralized place where everyone can get and put information (e.g. data bank that has all current information)?
36. How could the different mediation actors best utilize the networks, expertise and/or knowledge that exists in Finland?
37. What means and channels are most effective for influencing and/or networking? How to best influence other actors?
38. Where and how do you collect information on conflicts and peace processes?
39. How does the communication work in practice between the different actors, internally, in projects and between partners?
40. How could the communications be improved in your opinion? What works and what not?
41. Are social media or other digital tools a good way to influence and work? Why or why not?
42. How do you utilize social media in cooperation, in keeping contact, communicating, in collecting and receiving information or reporting?

43. How often are workshops, working groups, forums or other (a bit more official) group meetings organized between the different national mediation actors (T1 and T2)?

Finlands mediation (mediation capacity)

44. How is Finlands mediation, its strengths and weaknesses?
45. What is Finlands role and speciality or niche in mediation?
46. What does Finlands mediation need and what resources or means Finland has?
47. How to develop Finlands mediation capacity?
48. Should the existing resources and/or parties be combined into one (mediation capacity development network)?

The role of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland

49. What is role of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland in regards to mediation and peace processes (mainly)?
50. What action or role would you wish for the MFA in regards to mediation?
51. What pros and cons do you see in a situation where the MFA would be:
- c. In charge of, for example, the budget, fasilitation (upholding dialogue and interaction) drafting the action plan, building a national mediation capacity
 - d. Sharing the responsibility with cooperation partners (FCA, CMI, WISE, TAPRI, CMC, FIIA, SaferGlobe Finland, another government body)?

APPENDIX 3. List of the interviewees

The following introduction of the interviewees is based on the interviews and on how the interviewees presented themselves and their relevant experience regarding mediation, mediation networks and their cooperation and coordination. It does not cover the interviewees entire work background, even if it would include relevant information on their knowledge and position as a respondent.

Tarja Kantola is participating actively in many CSO's, for example, as a chairman of the FCA and WISE. However, she has been more involved with mediation through her long career at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland and especially at the position as a special assistant of the former Foreign Minister Erkki Tuomioja. Even though the Minister for Foreign Affairs does not really participate in practice to mediation (MFA and the Minister of FA supports and the special representative takes action), mediation was one of the central rising matters in the government politics in 2012. She was at the Ministers cabinet contributing to what was decided and honing the funding so that a working model for operating could be reached. Ms. Kantola was also aboard when the Friends of Mediation group was founded together with Turkey. They took the idea forwards and presented ways to organize the resources for it and then planned how much effort it needs at the UN general assembly. Furthermore, their mission was to develop the mediation practices and capacity of the UN. In this interview she speaks with her entire extensive knowledge but especially with the experience from the MFA.

Kimmo Kiljunen is a long-term politician and has acted as a Special Representative for Mediation of the Minister for Foreign Affairs for four years and has been directly involved in mediation and developed Finlands mediation concretely. In addition, he has plenty of experience from the OSCE where he participated in a similar group as friends of mediation of the UN. The job of a Special Representative for Mediation is to strengthen Finlands mediation activities and with his own efforts to promote Finlands

international position and relations. By definition, the special representative has certain freedom of action that offers him in some cases the opportunity to influence more flexibly than other diplomats. He can also make bolder initiatives than what is possible for example for the regional departments. Still, the special representative has to follow the line of foreign policy.

Lauratuulia Lehtinen worked in 2015 at the MFAs political department in the UN unit as a Coordinator for Mediation. The UN unit is in charge of mediation and Finland's mediation support and coordination. Many departments at the Ministry have tasks relating to mediation but the political section keeps track of everything that comes to Finland's mediation profile or action planning on a general level. They also plan the activities of the Minister and the Special Representative, offer views, read reports and brainstorm together with the other MFA departments. The political department does not grant funds nor is it directly in contact with the regional actors. Regional departments do that. Furthermore, Finland in itself does not have an official position in peace processes or negotiations but it is involved through UN, OSCE and EU and through various local and Finnish CSO's, mainly by funding them.

Meeri-Maria Jaarva worked in 2015 at CMI as the Head of Programme Development & Coordination. She has plenty of direct experience from mediation itself and of high-level negotiations but at that moment she was more focused on the internal processes. CMI is about 15 years old civil society organization that does peace mediation around the world. They have their own dialogue projects but they also support other mediators such as the EU, the AU or the OSCE. CMI has strong cooperation with T1 and T2 actors and they operate somewhere in between those tracks. They have good connections to high and official levels but they do not operate on the so-called grassroots level. They do not have the possibility to bring together masses so they need to reach certain influential figures that can affect them and on decisions that have been already made. In general, they need people with good connections both up and down in the society like researcher or governor. CMI also sometimes supports unofficial discussions that in the

end support the official process. Moreover, they have operated in situations where there is no official process.

Anne Palm is the Secretary general at WISE (former KATU). She has extensive experience in civilian crises management, conflict prevention and peacebuilding. Her mediation knowledge derives from cooperation partners such as CMI and FCA, various trainings and seminars, and through general information sharing in the field. WISE is only intermediately involved in mediation activities and mainly focuses the minimal resources on organizing trainings and seminars themselves and on publications.

Janne Oksanen was in charge of the national Coordination Group on Mediation at the MFA at the time of the interview. Regarding his mediation experience, he had worked previously in Africa related projects at the MFA, for instance, as an African Union desk, where a cooperation project relating to mediation was initiated together with the African Union and he also developed Finland's Africa politics in general. At the moment he was only intermediately dealing with mediation issues.

Antti Kaski is the Head of Planning and Research Department at the MFA. Among other things, he has been working with TAPRI (The Tampere Peace Research Institute) on a study regarding networking in the Nordic countries with the aim to bring together non-governmental organizations. In addition, he has represented Finland at the EU and participated in organizing a large mediation related conference under the authority of the MFA. The planning and research department itself is only intermediately involved in mediation related issues.